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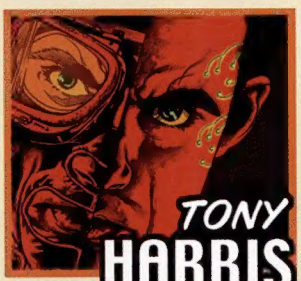

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Issue
#1626
March 2007

NEW AVENGERS: ILLUMINATI

WRITERS BRIAN MICHAEL BENDIS AND BRIAN REED PLUS ARTIST JIM CHEUNG SPILL SECRETS!

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This issue's cover is by
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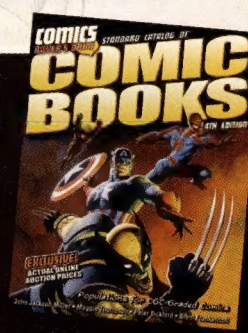

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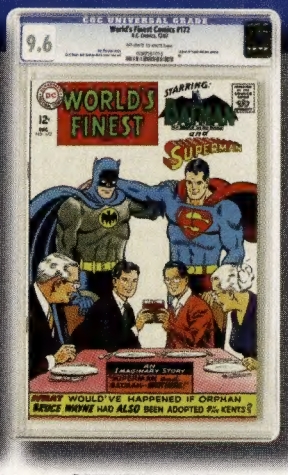

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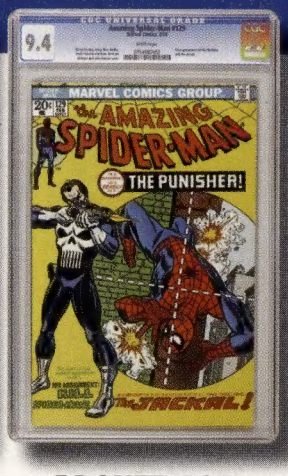

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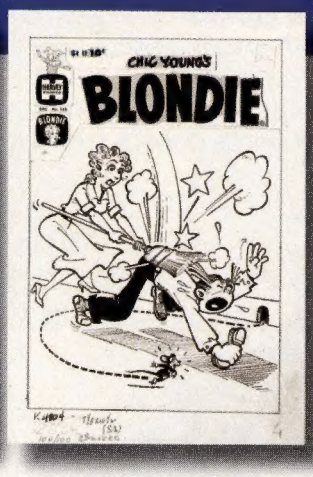

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BRIAN EARNEST

JOB: Editorial Director Pop Culture — F+W Publications. *Goldmine* magazine Editor — F+W Publications.

PREVIOUS LIVES: Book editor — F+W Publications; newspaper editor and writer; bartender, busboy, paperboy ... rodeo clown, trapeze artist, base jumper, Navy test pilot, polar bear breeder, solo synchronized swimming champion, forgotten fifth member of the kids' band The Wiggles, roadie for The Who, and professional liar.

FIRST COMIC BOOK: Wow, I have no idea what the title was or the number, but it was definitely *Amazing Spider-Man.* Probably somewhere around 1972?

FIRST *CBG*: I don't know what was on the cover, but it would have been in the summer of 2000, when I came to Krause/F+W. I rounded up copies of everything our company published. I remember wondering how many people it took to produce ***CBG***. I thought it probably required an army. Turns out it only takes a surprisingly small number of terrifying aliens.

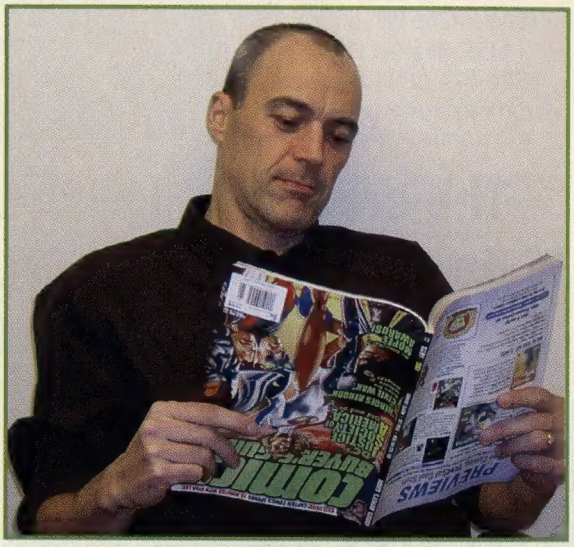
COMICS NOW READING: Nothing at the moment. My free time is pretty minimal these days. I've got a couple regular books I'm trying to finish.

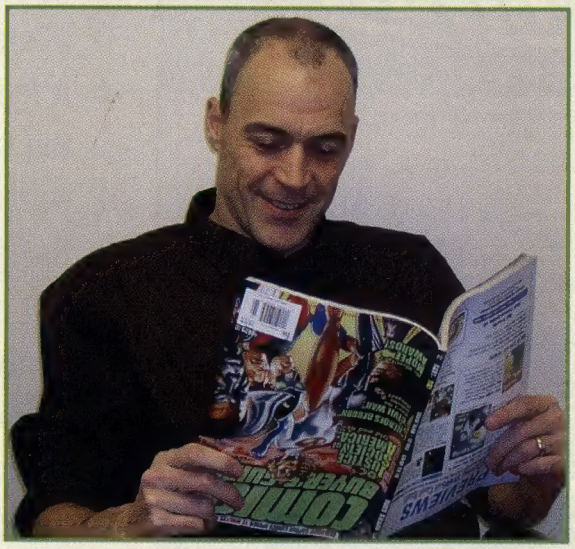
AND WITHOUT PICTURES: *Ghost Rider: Travels on the Healing Road* by Neil Peart, the drummer for Rush. *Going Long* by Gordo Byrne. It's a book on long-distance triathlon. And some book about Abraham Lincoln. I can't even remember the title. I stopped reading it a couple months ago and haven't picked it up again. Maybe this winter I'll finish it.

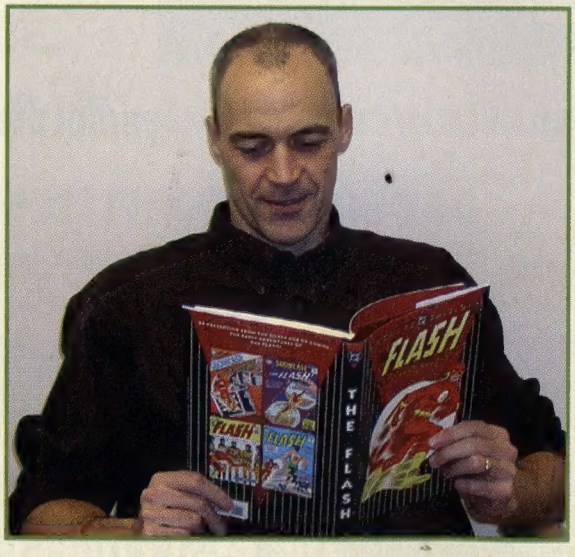
THAT AND A BUCK WILL GET YOU: Huh? I don't know much about money. My wife doesn't let me have any. Last time I had a buck was about 10 years ago, when I was heading to the jewelry store to buy an engagement ring. I've *heard* about money since then but never actually seen any.

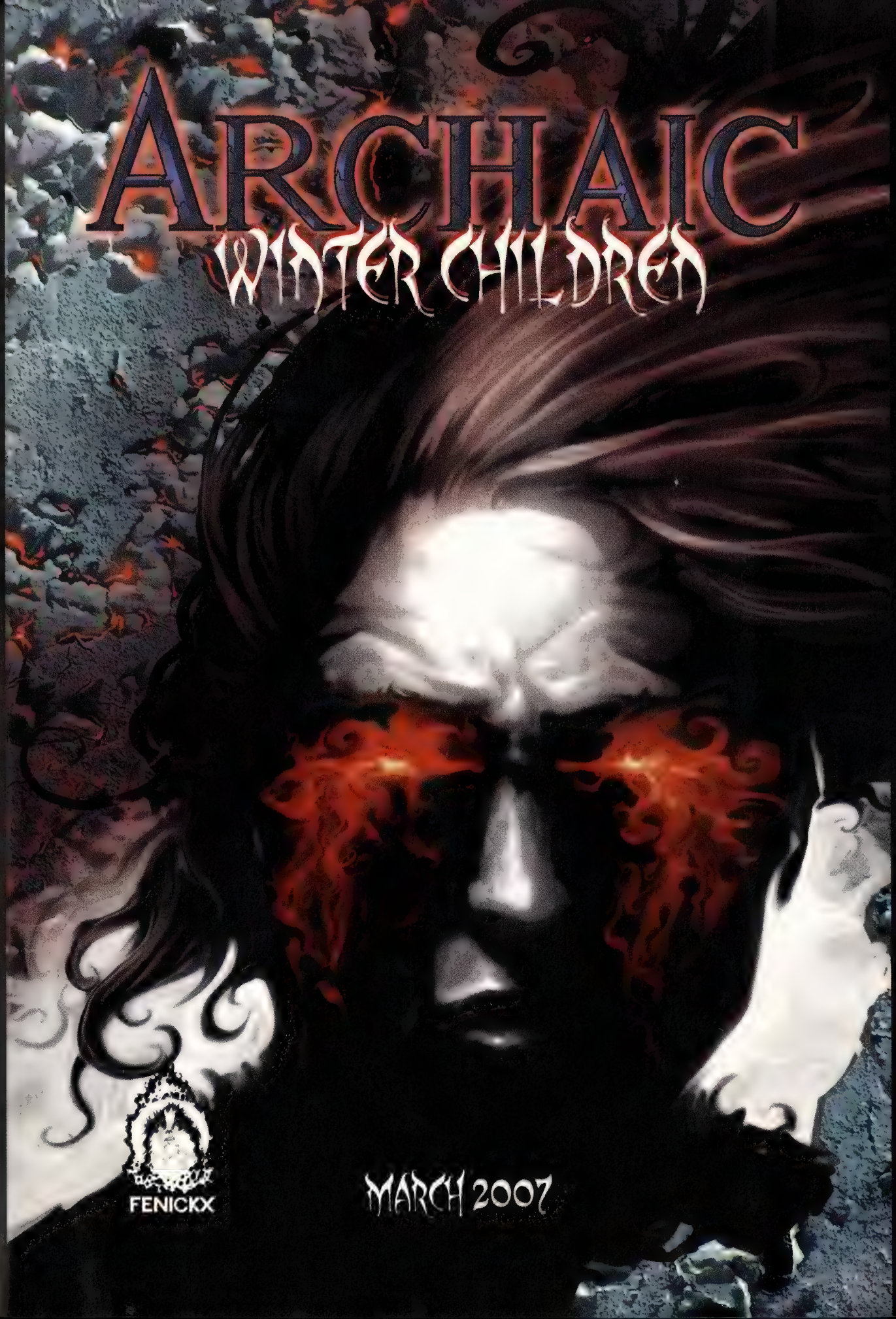
ESCAPES FROM COMICS: More like escapes from work. My wife and three little kids (ages 5 years, 2 years, and 8 months) are all the escape I need. The Earnest household is a zoo. When I need to escape the zoo, I train for triathlons and marathons.

BRUSHES WITH GREATNESS: I was a sportswriter years ago with three different daily papers, so I got to interview lots of big-name sports folks: Mary Lou Retton, Isiah Thomas, Dennis Rodman, Mike Ditka ... the list is pretty long. I once had a rather uncommon side-by-side, uh, meeting in a men's room with then-Wisconsin Gov. Tommy Thompson. I think the conversation went something like: "Gee, hi, Governor. Wow, I guess you had to go pretty bad ..."





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"A lot of the things that happen in the Marvel universe happen immediately. You can't smell them coming, so we'll have the Illuminati dealing with the aftermath and seeing what they learn from it."
— Brian Michael Bendis

SHEDDING LIGHT ON THE ILLUMINATI

Brian Michael Bendis & Co. talk about Marvel's newest longtime super-team

by **RAY SIDMAN**

Imagine a team composed of several of the biggest heroes in the Marvel universe and imagine they form a self-policing group intent on deciding what's best for humanity and the world would take. Would that make the citizens of Earth happy? Concerned?

As seen in the *New Avengers: Illuminati* one-shot a few months ago, such a group has existed in the Marvel universe for some time — the brainchild of writer Brian Michael Bendis, who, along with co-writer Brian Reed, has brought the team out for a five-issue mini-series of the same name.

As seen in the one-shot, Black Panther is the lone member of the original group not present, having seen the group as — as Bendis put it — "going down a bad road," leaving Mr. Fantastic, Charles Xavier, Tony Stark, Doctor Strange, Namor, and Black Bolt as the secret cabal in charge of protecting the Earth and its denizens.

Bendis, Reed, and mini-series artist Jim Cheung spoke to ***CBG*** about the series and its ramifications for the Marvel universe, especially given the big question on readers' minds: Since this all-powerful (and then some) super-group has been together for several years of Marvel continuity, where have they been? Where were they for the Kree-Skrull War? Infinity Gauntlet? Mutant Massacre? Maximum Security? House

Where were they for the Kree-Skrull War? Infinity Gauntlet? Mutant Massacre? Maximum Security? House of M? The list goes on.

"If I had my way, the book would probably have twice the number of pages."
— Jim Cheung

of M? The list goes on. (And Captain Comics addresses these questions, as well, in his article on Page 20.)

When asked, Bendis replied, "You have to take it this way: A lot of the things that happen in the Marvel universe happen immediately. You can't smell them coming, so we'll have the Illuminati dealing with the aftermath and seeing what they learn from it."

Reed explained the absence, as well: "We have picked a handful of places we're going to go, and the really cool thing is that, with 40 years of books, you can constantly find somewhere else that these guys could have been."

The two also discussed the writing process. According to Reed, "It changes issue to issue. Some of the time I write the first rough draft and then we talk; other times he'll write a few pages and I'll write a few pages. More often than not, one of us does a first rough draft, and even before that we'll chat a lot. We work out a loose plot structure for the issue, and then one of us will write the rough draft of it."

Such an undertaking as this requires an intricate knowledge of the Marvel universe's history and continuity, and both writers contribute to this part of the project. "The nice thing," said Reed, "is that neither one of us has that magical ability of complete knowledge of the Marvel universe, but both of us fill in the holes the other one has."

Bendis said he liked the pairing, and the two of them have worked on Marvel projects before, most recently on the videogame *Ultimate Spider-Man*. "We do have a very good rapport and different philosophies of certain stuff, so that makes co-writing a very vibrant experience. It's good to have more than one eye."

Cheung talked about how he came to be involved with the project and how it's working thus far. "The initial plan was to have different artists tackle each issue, since the mini was set to show the Illuminati's involvement during various events in Marvel's history. I was supposed to just do the first, but, after reviewing my schedule, Tom Brevoort asked if I'd be interested in the rest of the series. Since Allan Heinberg wouldn't be ready to start the second season of *Young Avengers* until next year, Tom figured *The Illuminati* would keep me busy and allow Allan some time to bank some *YA* scripts.

"This series has been challenging so far, because I am unfamiliar with Brian and Brian's writing styles. It's the first time I've worked with them together, so I'm still trying to get into their heads and see things through their eyes. Their scripts have been so rich and packed, though, that I often want to draw more than space allows. If I had my way, the book would probably have twice the number of pages. It's hard to cut back sometimes on all the images that the writing can evoke."

The co-writing Brians have the first four issues either done or well under way, with each issue examining a part of Marvel history that fans will likely recognize. ***(Spoiler Warning)***

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"The series addresses when the group errs, including Hulk. You've gotta see the thought process up to it: Some of the guys don't want to do it, and some do, but they operate as a democracy and they believe that they're doing good."
— Brian Reed

First up: the Kree-Skrull War. In that issue, The Illuminati go to Skrull world, as Bendis stated, "to literally take the fight back to the Skrulls. No one knows they did this but the group." Adding a bit of enticement, he said, "Any time you get Black Bolt unleashed, it's fantastic."

The second issue finds the team dealing with fallout from the *Infinity Gauntlet* saga. "After it happened, what are they going to do about it? We have the group decide to go after the Infinity Gems themselves, because, if someone else gets them, it's never good." Mr. Fantastic plays a significant role in this, largely due to the fact that, during *IG*, he was erased from existence. Writer Reed explained Mr. Fantastic's reaction and desire to gather the gems, given his fate when he last encountered them: "Reed basically tells the group, 'I gotta tell you guys, being erased from existence is not as pleasant as it sounds. I think we should collect these things and keep track of them."

Bringing us to #3, *Secret Wars*, and, as Reed put it, "the first time The Illuminati get to be proactive." Post-*Secret Wars* finds the team "going out there and trying to find The Beyonder and keeping anything like that from happening again." Bendis elaborated, saying that in this issue, "readers find out a secret about The Beyonder that nobody knows outside of The Illuminati, so we have secrets that they keep from everyone else for arguably good reasons. When you find out what the secret is, you might say, 'No, you should have told everybody,' or not, but there's the argument about why they keep things secret and why they don't involve their friends and families."

Reed said the last two issues are more up in the air, though the ideas are there. For the last couple of issues, "We know loosely what we want to do but we haven't pegged down exactly where they're happening in history yet." However, the fourth issue has *House of M* factors, according to Bendis. "What we have here is the group proactively involving themselves in someone else's story in the attempt of not having a repeat of what happened with The Scarlet Witch — here's a very powerful person who questions morality and can actually be a very huge threat to them."

Does this self-policing super-team question itself? "It's the combination of 'absolute power

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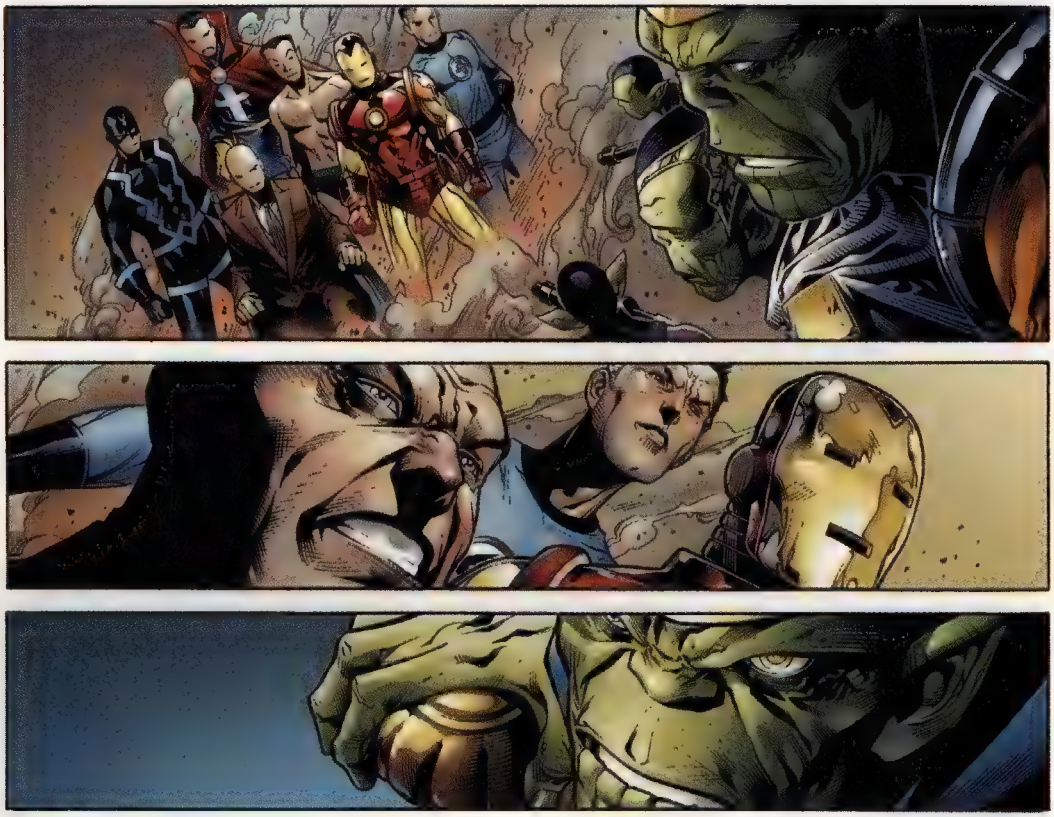


"I'm just a big, big fan of the guy in the room who is telling you how it is."
— Brian Michael Bendis

corrupts absolutely,' and, 'with great power comes great responsibility,' " said Reed, "and these guys are treading that line every day." One big question about abuse of power: The Hulk and his banishment through a wormhole to another planet. "With Hulk, that's pretty questionable, but they thought they were doing the right thing for Earth and for him in that situation," replied Reed.

Other situations are more cut-and-dried, such as The Illuminati's visiting the Skrulls in the aftermath of the Kree-Skrull War and telling them to stay away from Earth. "It's interesting to see the Skrulls say, 'Wait a minute — who are these strange little monkey people who are coming to us and threatening us?' " Reed said he also finds it interesting, when The Illuminati realize that they're powerful, but sometimes there are even greater powers out there.

Also, opinions and strategic preferences differ among the members. "There's always the voice of doing what's easy: 'Maybe we could just kill The Beyonder' — 'No, can't do that, that's not what we do,' " said Reed. "So the series addresses when the group errs, including Hulk. You've gotta see the thought process up to it: Some of the guys don't want to do it, and some do, but they operate as a democracy and they believe that they're doing good."

Bendis likewise said, "That's what's great about the group: They all have different worldview philosophies." Namor never questions himself, Reed questions himself a lot, and they all speak out "arguing about the bigger points that they're after."

When ***CBG*** asked the two writers about which characters and voices they preferred writing on this book, they offered different responses.

Bendis immediately replied: Namor. "And I'll tell you why: I'm just a big, big fan of the guy in the room who is telling you how it is. You know, Namor is always kinda right, he doesn't talk like an ass, he says things that are right, but he says them so obnoxiously with such a keen arrogance, it's the way he says it that just drives the room insane."

Reed picked Reed Richards, because, in part, as a kid he liked Spider-Man and his brother liked The Fantastic Four, and Mr. Fantastic was the character he knows best.

And such a powerful group needs a voice of conscience. Again, the co-writers had different answers on this topic. Reed chose Xavier, though he admitted Xavier has been not the nicest of guys. "Xavier, in recent history, has been kind of a jerk," and he added that *Illuminati* addresses why he's been that way. Bendis said he felt Black Bolt is the conscience, "because he's forced by his power to think more than speak, so he's that quiet voice in your head" who gets to speak via Xavier's telepathy. Reed gave his own take on Black Bolt, with a laugh, "He fits into the severe-pain-in-the-ass-because-he-has-no-dialogue-ever category. You end up doing a ventriloquism act, if you're not

careful, because Xavier keeps saying, 'Well, you know, Black Bolt says ...' "

So who's the pragmatist? According to Reed, it's again Mr. Fantastic, with his ideology that, "if he can keep track of all the variables, he can take care of the problem."

When asked who, if anyone, in the group was the most manipulative, Bendis answered, "They all have their ability to do that. Tony is the one — and I hate to encourage the idea that Tony's an ass, because I don't think he's an ass — but Tony's much more sure about his vision of the future than the rest of them are and he's definitely trying to make the world a better place, but it's *his* vision of what the world would be, and not necessarily everyone else's.

"I think people reading *Civil War* are having trouble grasping that idea, because it does smell of Magneto, it does smell of, 'Oh, well that's *your* vision of the future, not necessarily *mine*, you ass.' So, like Magneto's, it's an arguable point about how it comes along, how it's brought to life."

Reed said the most manipulative member is Namor due to his warrior's attitude. "He thinks, 'If there's anything causing us problems, let's smash it.' Namor's hard, because it's easy to fall into the trap of 'He's just a jerk,' and you're just writing him as an ass all the time and you can forget to give him justification — he's the trickiest to write."

Regarding the notion of more Illuminati comics, neither writer opposed the idea, nor would they say how likely the concept is. Bendis commented, "I'm not going to say no, because what you *don't* want to do is just shove it into any old Marvel event. We've picked our events very carefully to make sure this mini-series is special.

"We could do it, but, once it's out, it's kinda hard to put the genie back in the bottle — plus there's a lot coming in the Marvel universe after *Civil War* that has all new kinds of conspiracies and threats happening, and I think I'm just going to focus on those. Ideally, what would be really cool is that it'd be like when The Watcher shows up: When this group gets together, you know the situation is serious."

Meanwhile, Reed said that the ideas just keep flowing. "I don't know what will come of any of it, but everything we do just causes more ideas."

For now, however, fans also wonder about the timing, especially with the fifth issue likely set for release specifically after the conclusion to *Civil War*. When asked about whether all the issues would come out on time, Bendis replied, "Absolutely — and the good news is that, other than the ending, which will happen after *Civil War*, it is unaffected by what's happening in *Civil War*, so it should be no problem whatsoever."

"I don't know what will come of any of it, but everything we do just causes more ideas."
— Brian Reed

What has Marvel's secret society done lately?

Illuminating the Illuminati

by ANDREW "CAPTAIN COMICS" SMITH

This issue's cover feature focuses on Marvel's *New Avengers: Illuminati* mini-series, a concept that makes this long-time reader twitch.

In case you haven't perused the rest of this issue because you flip directly to the Captain's column every month (bless you!) and don't read *New Avengers*: The "Illuminati" are a continuity implant established in the *New Avengers: Illuminati* one-shot (May 06) by writer Brian Michael Bendis. (Technically, they were referred to as early as *New Avengers* #7 (Jul 05), but we didn't get the skinny until the one-shot.)

The conceit of *NA:I* is that: After the Kree-Skrull War (*Avengers* #89-97, first series, Jun 71-Mar 72), Tony "Iron Man" Stark drew together what he considered the heads of various super-human factions to create a gigantic super-team of some sort. That didn't work out — just about everyone involved hated the idea — but the principals agreed to meet privately to finesse "big things," such as the Kree-Skrull War, before they begin.

Which leads to the *New Avengers: Illuminati* mini-series, five issues that will show what this cabal has been doing behind the scenes since 1972. Which further leads to the aforementioned twitching. (Plus a little drooling. And let's not mention the spastic flatulence.)

Because, as I keep reminding everyone, including homeless people and lepers, I've read virtually every Marvel comic book since there was a Marvel, going back to 1961. And I've certainly read every book of any significance since 1972. Which is 34 years' worth of stories since The Illuminati was supposedly formed: 34 years in which a lot of stuff has happened, most of which will not politely allow itself to be folded into Bendis' neat idea.

The first thing that leaps to mind is: If there has been an Illuminati, where the heck have they been? If they had existed and were any good at their jobs, most of the big stories I've read since '72 would never have happened!

Or, at the very least, would have happened differently.

Where was Namor the 502 times Galactus tried to eat the Earth? Where was Prof. X all those times S.H.I.E.L.D. went rogue? Where was Doctor Strange when Brad Pitt dumped Jennifer Aniston for Angelina Jolie? (I'm still

steaming about that one.) Where were *all* of them (except, usually, The FF and/or The Avengers) the umpty-jillion times the planet was invaded by aliens, trans-dimensional armies, ticked-off elder gods, or time-traveling malcontents? If there *has* been an Illuminati, then it's manifestly incompetent!

But look: I know continuity isn't very important at either Marvel or DC any more. Today's creators consider it "old school," like footnotes and thought balloons, so they don't trouble themselves much about it. Maybe that's a good thing or a bad thing; I don't know.

Upshot is: Bendis has gotten hold of a good conspiracy-theory tale, and, in the spirit of the times, it seems unlikely he'll let a couple of 20- or 30-year-old stories stand in the way. He'll doubtless accommodate what's convenient, but I don't expect that many of my fanboy agitations will be addressed — especially in a mini-series that covers 34 years but is only five issues long.

But we are fanboys, hear us roar! It's our habit to pick at the bleeding scab of continuity trivia until it becomes infected! And, since I don't expect most of the details of this continuity implant to be ironed out in the comics themselves, it's also a job: a challenge to figure out how to make it all work.

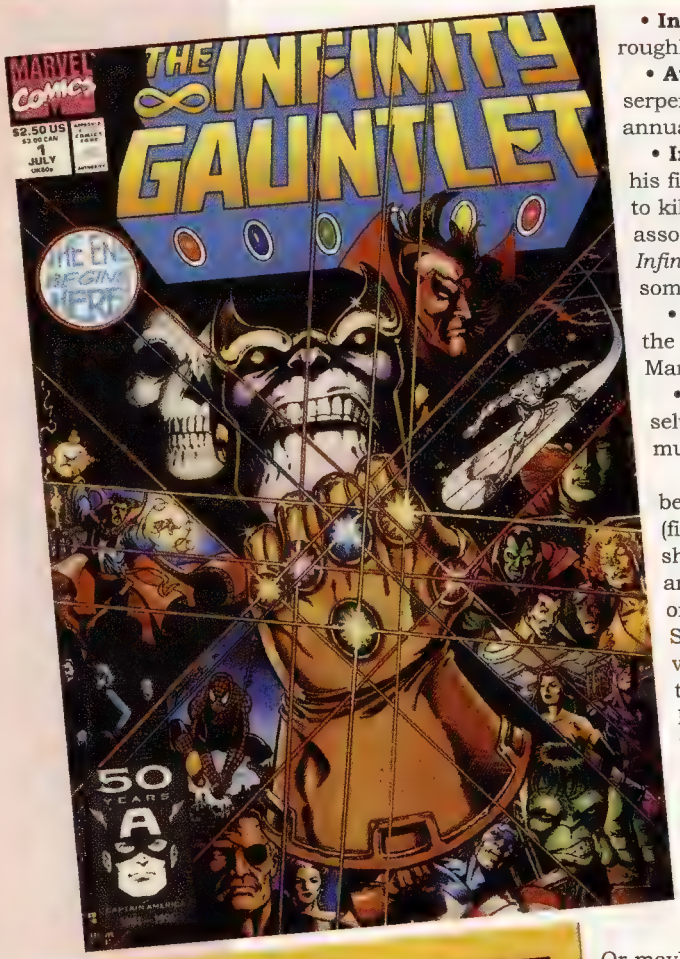
So let's first identify our problems. For example, here are some of the post-'72 events I think The Illuminati should have addressed or prevented:

• **The Secret Empire:** One of Marvel's clandestine terrorist groups secretly took over the White House (*Captain America* #169-176, first series, Jan-Aug 74), which I think qualifies as a world threat.

• **The Korvac Saga:** A machine god from the future subtly rearranged the universe to "improve" it — and (temporarily) killed The Avengers and Guardians of the Galaxy in defense of his plan (*Avengers* #168-177, first series, Feb-Nov 78).

• **Mutant Massacre:** Hundreds of Morlocks (underground mutants) were murdered in New York City, in a story involving, not only The X-Men and X-Factor, but also Thor, Daredevil, and Power Pack (*Uncanny X-Men* #210-213, Oct 86-Jan 87, plus *X-Factor* #9-11 and crossovers elsewhere).

• **Evolutionary War:** The High Evolutionary tried to accelerate human evolution worldwide, while eliminating such "lower" races as mutants and Deviants (11 Marvel annuals, 1988).



• **Inferno:** Demonic invasion of Earth (dozens of Marvel titles, roughly Dec 88-Mar 89).

• **Atlantis Attacks:** Ghaur and Llyra teamed up to restore the serpent god Set in order to (gasp!) conquer the world (14 Marvel annuals, 1989).

• **Infinity Gauntlet:** Thanos collected the Infinity Gems, and his first act as master of the universe's sentient beings was to kill half of them (*Infinity Gauntlet* #1-6, Jul-Dec 91, plus assorted crossovers). Go ahead and toss in *Infinity War* (1992), *Infinity Crusade* (1993), and *Infinity Abyss* (2002) as matters of some concern.

• **Operation: Galactic Storm:** War between the Kree and the Shi'ar, with Earth in the middle (Avengers-related titles, Mar-May 92).

• **The Phalanx Covenant:** Human bigots exposed themselves to the techno-organic virus in order to wipe out mutants worldwide (various X-books, Sep-Oct 94).

• **Avengers: The Crossing:** Iron Man was revealed to have been Kang's hyp-mo-tized sleeper agent since *Avengers* #8 (first series, Apr 64). Stark killed a few people, Immortus showed up, there was something about Space Phantoms, and, um ... actually, I'm not sure what this was all about, only that it was appalling (various Avengers-related books, Sep 95-Feb 96). Iron Man was later replaced by a teenaged version of himself (*Avengers: Timeslide*, Feb 96), which tells you the level of creativity here, since the same thing happened to DC's The Atom at about the same time. Thankfully, most of this was retconned away in "Heroes Return" and *Avengers Forever*.

• **Onslaught:** The "bad parts" of Professor X and Magneto combined to form a villain who ... you know, I don't remember *what* Onslaught was trying to do. For a number of months, his actions seemed pretty random (various Marvel titles, Mar-Oct 96). I guess he was trying to conquer the world, since that's a pretty standard plan. Or maybe eat it, I dunno. But his *real* purpose, as we all know, was to launch ...

• **Heroes Reborn:** The year the Marvel universe didn't make any sense (Nov 96-Nov 97).

• **Operation: Zero Tolerance:** The U.S. government sanctioned the extermination of all mutants (various X-books, summer 1998).

• **Maximum Security:** Alien empires isolated Earth and turned it into a penal colony, dumping super-powered alien criminals everywhere (*Maximum Security* #1-3, various Avengers-related titles, Oct 00-Jan 01).

• **E Is for Extinction:** Sentinels massacred millions in Genosha, as ordered by Charles "Professor X" Xavier's evil twin sister, Cassandra Nova (*New X-Men* #114-116, Jul-Sep 01).

• **The Kang Dynasty:** Kang finally conquered the world and killed loads of people, including the entire population of Washington, D.C. (*Avengers* #41-55 aka #456-470, third series/first series, Jun 01-Aug 02).

• **The Order:** Doctor Strange, Hulk, Sub-Mariner, and Silver Surfer conquered the world (*The Order* #1-6, Apr-Sep 02). Funny, it was at the same time Kang did it.

• **Khan:** An inter-dimensional invader tried to take over the world and had the means to do it (*X-Treme X-Men* #10-18, Apr-Nov 02). Um, he kinda overlapped Kang and The Order, too. I wonder if they took turns?

• **Planet X:** Magneto conquered New York and started marching people off to crematoria (*New X-Men* #146-150, Nov 03-Feb 04). At least he waited until the other guys were through. (It has since been retconned that "Magneto" was actually Xorn, or one of two *twin* Xorns, possibly possessed by

the sentient bacteria colony Sublime. No, I am not making this up.)

There are probably other crises I've overlooked, but what these things all have in common is that they would have attracted the attention of The Illuminati, had this cabal existed. And these crises would have been prevented or truncated by these guys, if they were any good at their jobs.

As it is, usually the only ones involved were Mr. Fantastic (in *Fantastic Four*-related stories), Iron Man (*Avengers*), and Prof. X (X-books). And sometimes Doctor Strange (probably because he has a cool costume). But The Illuminati who didn't have their own books (Black Panther, Black Bolt, Namor) never seemed to notice when the planet was invaded, almost eaten, or turned into an alien Alcatraz. Funny how that worked.

And speaking of the cast of The Illuminati, they've all got individual baggage for us fans to figure out:

Black Bolt

What the heck is he doing here? Aren't The Inhumans kinda dedicated to avoiding us? Come to think of it, The Inhumans really haven't shown up often in Marvel history. Mainly, as I mentioned above, because The Inhumans have rarely had a regular title of any kind.

For our purposes, the main things to worry about are:

• The location of The Great Refuge, Attilan. In any Illuminati meeting set in the past, care would have to be taken to refer correctly to where the darn thing was. Since its founding in pre-history, it's been located in the North Atlantic, the Himalayas, the Blue Area of the Moon, the North Atlantic again, the Himalayas again, and the Blue Area again (where it is now).

• Black Bolt (and the rest of the royal family) was enslaved by the Kree and in outer space in *Inhumans* #1-4 (Jun-Oct 00).

Otherwise, Bendis can pretty much do what he wants with Blackagar Boltagon.

Black Panther

No worries again: The Panther rejected the cabal at their founding — so we can assume that he will not have much of a role in The Illuminati's history. (Because he knows about them and hasn't said anything, he's a co-conspirator, whether he likes it or not, so I include him here.)

Also, The Panther's continuity is fairly snarled, anyway, with the versions presented in Don McGregor's ponderous *Jungle Action* #5-24 (Jun 73-Nov 76), Jack Kirby's goofy *Black Panther* #1-12 (Jun 77-Nov 78), and Christopher Priest's Machiavellian *Black Panther* #1-62 (Nov 98-Sep 03) being almost impossible to reconcile. (Although Priest took a valiant stab at it, with some sort of brain-damaged Panther clone.)

Moreover, modern writers have already retconned his membership in The Avengers (he was actually a spy) and ignored some other parts of T'Challa's history, such as when he called himself The Black Leopard (a link to the '60s that had to be severed) and when he had a secret ID as a schoolteacher in Harlem. (Which just didn't make any sense.)

The Panther's continuity is so flexible, in fact, that the *New Avengers: Illuminati* one-shot actually *improved* it.

For example, Priest introduced in his series the idea that Iron Man and Panther have been feuding and/or competing for a number of years behind the scenes. *Illuminati* gives us a foundation for that.

It was also Priest (I think) who established that T'Challa was a spy in The Avengers, signing up only to determine if America's super-heroes posed a threat to Wakanda. It was a good explanation for why an African

There are probably other crises I've overlooked, but what these things all have in common is that they would have attracted the attention of The Illuminati, had this cabal existed.

king would lower himself to join an American super-group, but it made the Panther look kinda paranoid — until now, as *Illuminati* retroactively justifies T'Challa's concerns.

Perversely, though, while it makes Panther look better, it makes Iron Man look terrible. According to this retcon, Tony Stark would have known why The Panther was in The Avengers all along and, therefore, allowed his own team to be spied on for years. Yuck.

"Civil War" note: T'Challa made a speech in Illuminati that essentially predicted the current conflict.

Doctor Strange

Stephen Strange is another character whose continuity is so sloppy that almost any *Illuminati* revelation can be accommodated. He has lost and regained his abilities and abandoned and re-adopted his sorcerous role umpty-jillion times. But, presumably, any Illuminati meeting can be said to occur only during the times he was "in uniform."

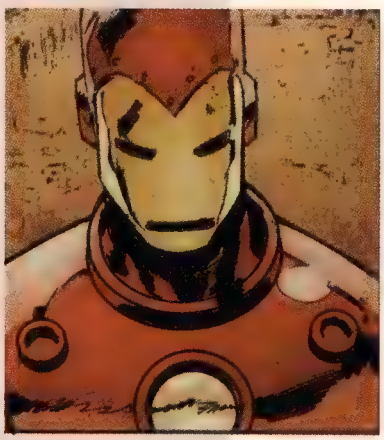
Also, his long history with Namor (in The Defenders) can be safely ignored, since they were never particularly close.

The only real Doctor Strange continuity issue for me is whether the *New Avengers: Illuminati* mini-series will address *The Order* (see above). Which, you know, seems like something The Illuminati might want to talk to Namor and Strange about.

Also, Doctor Strange has been at the center of at least two events I can remember where the universe was destroyed (and everyone in it killed) but reconstructed by a cosmic being — and then everyone except Strange (and the readers) forced to forget it ever happened. I wonder if he's ever mentioned *that* at an Illuminati barbecue?

On the positive side, I was never entirely satisfied with writer Bill Mantlo's explanation for The Master of the Mystic Arts banishing The Hulk to The Crossroads in *Incredible Hulk* #300, Oct 84 (the Sorcerer Supreme of an entire dimension *couldn't think of another solution*) — or why, if he really liked the idea, Strange didn't simply repeat it when The Hulk came back. But, given the recent actions of The Illuminati in exiling The Emerald Behemoth to "Planet Hulk," this clumsy plan now makes more sense — *as a decision made by committee.* In addition, *Incredible Hulk* #300 is now part of a pattern, not a fluke.

Let's count all the ways Tony Stark's behavior would have been of concern to such a group as The Illuminati (and, really, just about anyone else).



Iron Man

Oy vey, this one's a mess. Let's count all the ways Tony Stark's behavior would have been of concern to such a group as The Illuminati (and, really, just about anyone else):

• He was so drunk for 21 issues (*Iron Man,* first series, #170-191, May 83-Feb 85) that he allowed his armor to be taken over (while he was in it) and used to assassinate an ambassador. Then, he gave it up to James Rhodes for almost two years while he slept in the gutter.

"Civil War" note: This binge resulted in Tony's first (but not last) falling out with Steve "Captain America" Rogers.

• He decided to destroy all technology anywhere on the planet that used his Iron Man designs in "Armor Wars," resulting in lots of illegal (and public) combat, the death of The Titanium Man, a prison breakout, the disabling of S.H.I.E.L.D.'s Mandroid and Guardsman armor, and being declared an outlaw by the U.S. government (*Iron Man* #225-232, first series, Dec 87-Jul 88). It ended when he faked "Iron Man's" death, the death of a man who'd never existed. (I'm sure Nick Fury bought that one.)

"Civil War" note: You guessed it: another falling out with Captain America.

• He did the "Armor Wars" thing *again* in *Iron Man* #258-266, first series, Jul 90-Mar 91). Can anyone say "loose cannon"?

• He faked his own death for six months while in suspended animation, and Rhodey once again wore the armor (*Iron Man* #284-289, first series, Sep 92-Feb 93).

• He used a satellite network to forcibly mindwipe the entire world's memory of his secret identity (*Iron Man/Captain America '98 Annual,* 1998). Shades of *Identity Crisis*!

"Civil War" note: Do I need to mention this resulted in another falling out with Captain America?

• He decided at the end of "Operation: Galactic Storm" that The Avengers were too sissy for his tastes after the team voted against murdering the captured Supreme Intelligence (which Stark did anyway) and stomped off to form his own "proactive" group (*Force Works* #1-22, Jul 94-Apr 96).

"Civil War" note: Another falling out with Captain America. Collect 'em all!

• As mentioned above, he was revealed to have been an agent of Kang since the founding of the team in *Avengers: The Crossing* (Sep 95), murdered innocent people, and was then replaced by a teenage version of himself from, I think, another timeline ...

• ... which was erased when Franklin Richards re-created him in another universe in "Heroes Reborn" (Nov 96) and then re-re-created him in "Heroes Return" (Nov 97). Erased, yes, but surely Illuminati like Doctor Strange are aware of the "true" events ... and should look at Tony a little askance.

• When Scarlet Witch went bananas and

publicly disgraced Stark (by inducing a public drunken tirade against yet another ambassador) and then killed three Avengers (Hawkeye, Ant-Man, Vision), Stark's heroic solution was to ... quit. Resign as Secretary of Defense. Disband the Avengers. Give up. Cry in his Cheerios. Boo hoo.

There's probably more, but the list above is pretty damning. I'm not sure how to justify The Illuminati — or even The Avengers — putting up with this guy for so long.

"Civil War" note: As was the case with The Black Panther, every prediction Tony Stark made in the New Avengers: *Illuminati* one-shot came true. Especially an amazingly accurate description of the events that take place a few pages later in Stamford, Conn.

Mr. Fantastic

I have a hard time with this one, too.

I think we can take it as a given, without citing chapter and verse, that Reed Richards has personality flaws. Like, for example, not being the most attentive husband in the world. And keeping a secret or two from his teammates — from the revelation that he had been secretly exploring The Negative Zone (*Fantastic Four* #51, Jun 66) to why he formed the team in the first place (to make them celebrities in compensation for disfiguring them, *Fantastic Four* #60 aka #489, third series/first series, Oct 02).

He's also had a habit of making decisions for the entire team without consulting them, often decisions that at first blush seem kinda nuts. Like invading Latveria in defiance of the U.S., the U.N., S.H.I.E.L.D., most of the rest of the world, and one or two of his teammates (*Fantastic Four* #503-506, Oct 03-Jan 04).

But those flaws have always been, in my 45 years of reading *Fantastic Four*, the result of Richards wanting to do the right thing — and, being one of the smartest men on the planet, he usually knows what that is, even when it's not apparent to the rest of us. Whether it's invading Latveria or saving the life of Galactus (over Iron Man's objections but with Captain America's blessing — shades of "Civil War"!) in *Fantastic Four* #244 (first series, Jul 82) or flying to the Skrull galaxy to avenge the death of Sue's father (*Fantastic Four* #37, first series, Apr 65) or shutting down Franklin's brain to prevent the destruction of the world (*Fantastic Four* #141, first series, Dec 73) or entering the Negative Zone to find an element to save Sue during childbirth (*Fantastic Four Annual* #6, 1968) or endangering everyone on multiple occasions to cure Ben Grimm: Whatever nutty or dangerous or secretive thing Reed has done, he has always put principle ahead of pragmatism, ethics ahead of expediency, and justice ahead of "just us." *That's why we like him*, despite his poor social skills, and why Sue stays married to him. He may not be able to explain his plans in ways we can understand but he always ends up doing the right thing. That's why he's one of the most trusted men in the Marvel universe.

Or was. Now we see that he's been part of a conspiracy since 1972 and he has enthusiastically joined the pre-registration side of the current "Civil War."

The latter, in particular, is ironic (and grating), since Richards has dealt with this issue before — and did exactly the opposite. In *Fantastic Four* #335 (first series, Dec 89), The four were called before Congress to testify about a proposed Super-Human Registration Act — and Reed promptly blackmailed the U.S. government into dropping the idea. It made him no friends among The Powers That Be but it was the right thing to do.

Given "Civil War," though, he's, uh, apparently changed his mind.

Also, without citing chapter and verse, I'd like to take it as a given that Reed has never been depicted as anything but devoted to his wife. He may have his "absent-minded professor" moments where he ignores her for far too long, but there has never been any doubt (at least in my mind) that he's a one-woman man, that it's *other* women who are invisible to him, and that it would never occur to him to do anything but dote on Sue unto the grave. His fierce loyalty and single-minded adoration are the *other* reasons Sue stays married to him.

His participation in The Illuminati for years without telling the woman he loves more than life flies in the face of everything I've known about Reed's character for four and a half decades.

I just can't explain this one.

Professor Xavier

Hey, no problems here.

I'd like to take it as a given that Reed has never been depicted as anything but devoted to his wife.

Chuck's been a secretive, manipulative jerk since his inception.

Chuck's been a secretive, manipulative jerk since his inception. He's had so many nasty secrets over the years, The Illuminati doesn't even register.

Don't believe me? How about:

• He'd known about Magneto since before he founded The X-Men but didn't tell his teenage (!) charges about the most dangerous threat they'd ever face or train them to fight him, until after their first battle (*The X-Men* #1, Sep 63).

• He pretended to lose his mental powers as a graduation exercise, during which The X-Men were in mortal danger (*The X-Men* #4-5, Mar-May 64).

• He built Cerebro in a hidden room and didn't tell anyone what was in there until *The X-Men* #7 (Sep 64).

• He went on a secret mission against Lucifer, the alien who'd cost him his legs, and didn't tell anyone about the mission (or that Lucifer existed) until he needed rescue in *The X-Men* #9 (Jan 65).

• He didn't tell the team about his evil stepbrother, The Juggernaut, or have his students train to stop him, until Cain Marko almost killed them all (*The X-Men* #12-13, Jul-Sep 65).

• He created mechanical legs but didn't tell anyone until he appeared walking, in disguise, during a mission (*The X-Men* #22, Jul 66).

• He secretly kept The Juggernaut in a locked basement room under everyone's feet until *The X-Men* #32 (May 67), when Juggie (predictably) escaped and (predictably) nearly killed everybody.

• He pretended to die (*The X-Men* #42, Mar 68), an emotionally vicious charade only Jean Grey knew about — and he forced *her* to keep silent, thereby torturing her friends.

• Charlie revealed he was still alive in order to lead The X-Men against The Z'Nox, a threat he knew about before his "death" but, of course, didn't tell anyone about (*The X-Men* #65, Feb 70).

• And, of course, he used to routinely use his mental powers to make people "forget" they or their neighbors were mutants or to "change their minds" about important decisions: instances too many to catalog.

How many times has Namor tried to conquer the surface world? I can't think of any instances after 1972, necessarily, but I can't think of any reason anyone would trust him *not* to, either.

And that's only the *first run* of X-Men! Since their resurrection in 1975, a great many more of Charlie's prevarications, machinations, and loathsome tricks have come to light. Such as hiding the fact that the Danger Room was sentient and that he'd enslaved it. Such as the extent of Jean Grey's powers and how he'd held her back over the years, to "protect" her from a childhood trauma. Such as never telling anyone that Scott and Alex Summers had a third brother who'd led a second X-Men team against Krakoa back in '75, all of whom were thought killed.

Illuminati? The least of Charlie's sins. And, with his mental powers, it would have been no problem to keep it secret from The X-Men (as he did so many things).

The only continuity problems would be Xavier's necessary absence for Illuminati meetings that took place when he was in outer space with the Shi'ar, other storylines where he went underground, or the times he'd lost his powers.

Sub-Mariner

This one troubles me, too.

How many times has Namor tried to conquer the surface world? I can't think of any instances after 1972, necessarily, but I can't think of any reason anyone would trust him *not* to, either. And he doesn't exactly work and play well with others, so why would he ever show up for Illuminati meetings?

And, while Namor hasn't tried to conquer the world since The Illuminati began (that I remember), he's *never* stopped trying to get into The Invisible Woman's pants. Maybe the others would tolerate him, but Reed Richards owes him nothing but a rap in the mouth.

And, if Namor was "teammates" with Doctor Strange and Mr. Fantastic in The Illuminati all these years, wouldn't that have affected every appearance he ever had in *Defenders* and *Fantastic Four*? Wouldn't he have talked to them before any fight or a whole lot during the fight or alluded to greater knowledge than he was supposed to have? In fact, why would they ever fight again?

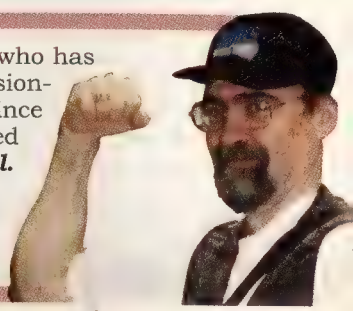
Maybe all this will be addressed in the miniseries. But I'm not hopeful — the one-shot has already blundered on Subby history by having him wear his blue "savage Sub-Mariner" outfit in the part of the story that took place in 1972 ... but Reed Richards (!) didn't invent it until *Sub-Mariner* #67 (Nov 73).

Oh, and then Professor X brings up Krakoa, which didn't happen until 1975. (And The Illuminati apparently did nothing about it.) I guess we must assume some telescoping of time ...

So *can* we reconcile this new concept with Marvel history as we know it? The gauntlet has been thrown, Legionnaires! If not now, then when? If not us, then who?

Because nobody else is going to bother!

Andrew Smith, who has been writing professionally about comics since 1992, can be reached at ***capncomics@aol.com*** or on his message board, ***www.captaincomics.us.***



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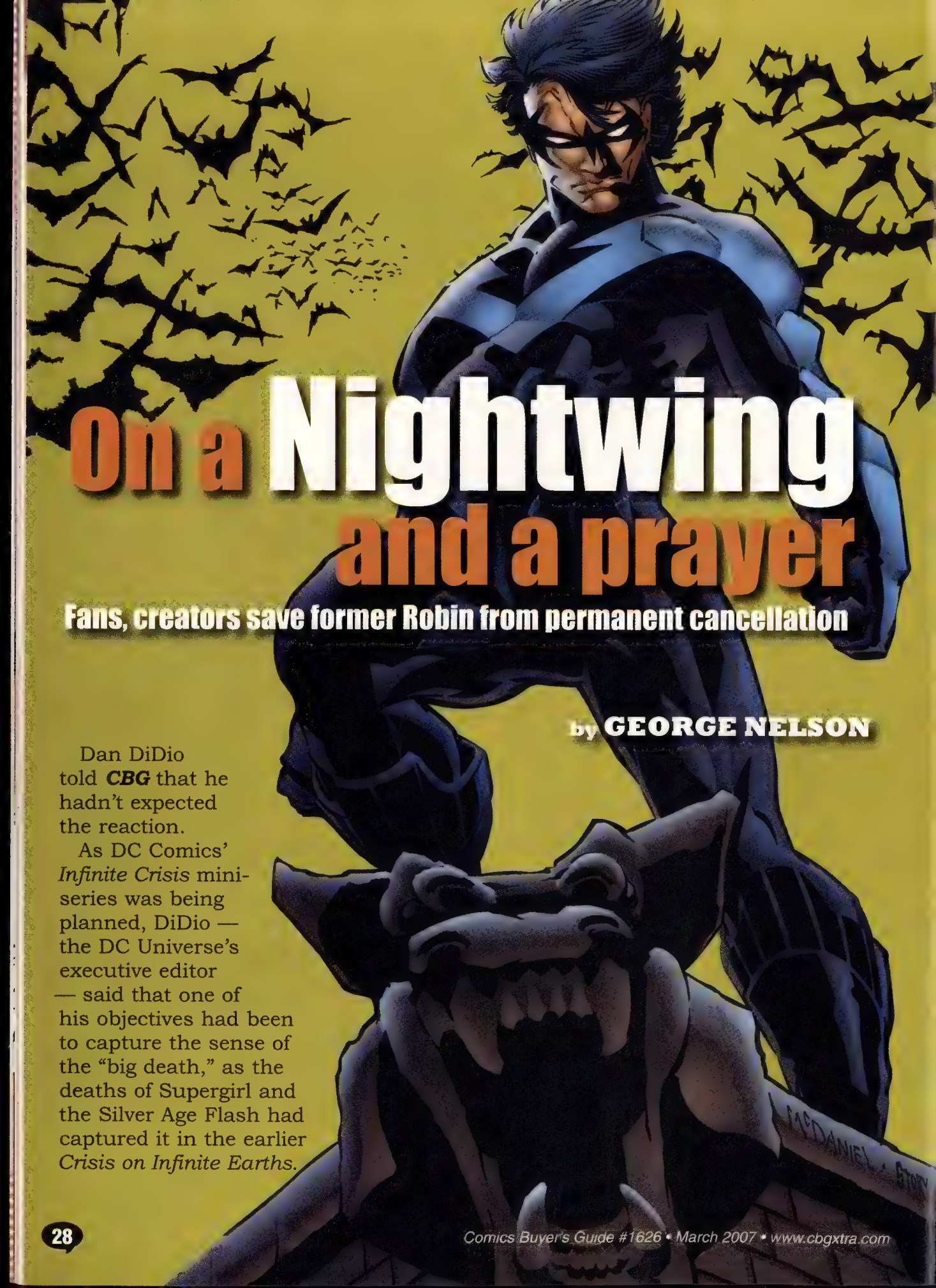


On a Nightwing and a prayer

Fans, creators save former Robin from permanent cancellation

by GEORGE NELSON

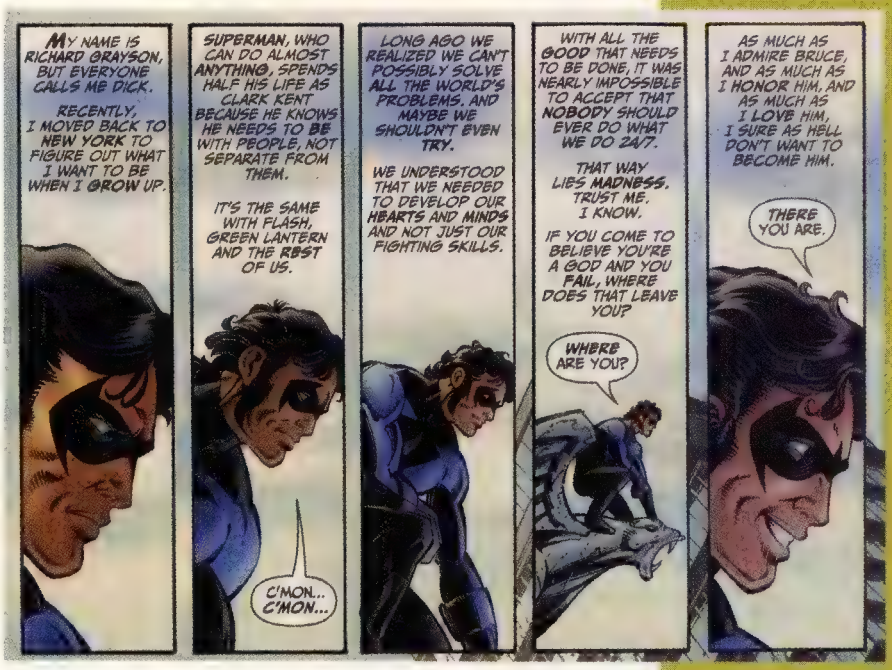
Dan DiDio told ***CBG*** that he hadn't expected the reaction.

As DC Comics' *Infinite Crisis* mini-series was being planned, DiDio — the DC Universe's executive editor — said that one of his objectives had been to capture the sense of the "big death," as the deaths of Supergirl and the Silver Age Flash had captured it in the earlier *Crisis on Infinite Earths*.

Among the characters placed on what he described as a "very short list" of characters slated to die in the series was Nightwing — also known as Dick Grayson, aka the original Robin, the Boy Wonder.

DiDio's reasoning was that Grayson, in both his guises, had touched almost every hero in the DC universe, and his death would affect them on a strong personal level. There was also a sense that the character was "displaced in his time." He'd long ago been replaced as Robin and he would never become Batman in continuity.

"He was really a character with no real course for the future and he couldn't return to the part of the past that made him great," DiDio said.



The response among DC creators was intense. When DiDio was asked at a Baltimore Comic-Con panel in September why Nightwing hadn't been killed in the series — a title that saw the demise of no less a character than *[**Spoiler Warning** for the three people who haven't yet read the series]* the Golden Age Superman — writer Mark Waid offered this reply: "Because Geoff Johns and I took turns holding a big club over Dan once we learned he wanted to."

DiDio said he'd been surprised that the idea had generated such a response. Sales of Nightwing's series had been flagging a bit, he said, and, while there was a lot of interest both in the current Robin (Tim Drake) and the recently revived Jason Todd, there appeared to be general apathy toward Dick Grayson's character. "I was always wondering where the strength of the fan base was for Dick, and they made themselves heard in a very positive, strong way," DiDio said.

Instead of a burial plot next to Thomas and Martha Wayne, Nightwing ended up getting a new lease on life, with Marv Wolfman taking over the writing reins on the character's monthly title. Wolfman, with artist George Pérez, had reinvigorated DC in the 1980s with *The New Teen Titans*, the title in which they graduated the one-time Boy Wonder to the Nightwing persona, a name actually taken from the Superman mythology.

Though *New Teen Titans* was DC's top-selling title at the time, Wolfman and Pérez approached the publisher with trepidation about a change for Grayson. Introduced in 1940, Robin was one of the company's oldest characters, firmly entrenched in the mind of the general public as Batman's partner and super-heroes' first kid sidekick. But for what the two were doing in The Titans at the time, they felt a change was necessary.

"The Bat books had decided they wanted to have a young Robin again as Batman's partner, but George and I had not only aged Dick Grayson, we matured him too much to go back to being a kid partner," Wolfman recalled.

"He had pretty much outgrown his position in the Batman mythos," agreed Pérez, who added that having the character good enough to be leader of The Titans but to be subordinate to Batman was "a bit schizophrenic."

Instead, Wolfman suggested the creation of a new young Robin to fulfill the role of Batman's sidekick, while Grayson would adopt a new super-hero name. "They loved that idea, as it would let them create a new character, and I loved it, because it meant I kept Dick Grayson as a character," Wolfman said — a decision no doubt helped by Titans' sales and the character's importance to the team. "It was a win-win situation," he added.

It also gave Wolfman and Pérez freedom to do more with the character within *Titans*, the artist said. "Of all the Titans, we had limited ability to advance him, since he was tied into the Batman books," Pérez remembered. "We wanted to give him equal treatment; that meant he had to be freed of ties to Batman as far as an ongoing partnership went."

Though he was among the more popular Titans characters and a DC favorite, it took more than a decade from Dick Grayson's debut as Nightwing in "The Judas Contract" arc until the character received an ongoing monthly, launched in 1996 by writer Chuck Dixon and artist Scott McDaniel.

Dixon recalled that he'd been enlisted to write the title just three weeks before the first script was due (after the writing team originally set to launch the book dropped out) and had been given the directive "to make each issue read like *two* Jackie Chan movies." The character was enormously popular with DC fans, so initial sales were strong.

"So the game was mine to lose. That took

"I was always wondering where the strength of the fan base was for Dick, and they made themselves heard in a very positive, strong way."
— Dan DiDio

some pressure off me. Starting a brand-new, unknown character in a brand-new book is like setting out to sea during a hurricane in a butter dish. You have everything against you," he remarked. "This time, the wind was with me."

Dixon established Grayson and Nightwing in the fictional city of Blüdhaven — a dirtier, coarser cousin of Gotham City, if that was possible — and gave the character a new supporting cast, though firmly set in the Batman and DC universes, with appearances during Dixon's run by Oracle (the former Batgirl), the current Robin, and, of course, The Dark Knight himself. Nightwing also acquired his own rogues' gallery consisting largely of new villains, though Dixon reinvented second-tier Bat-villain Blockbuster as Blüdhaven's crime boss and Nightwing's main adversary.

"Starting a brand-new, unknown character in a brand-new book is like setting out to sea during a hurricane in a butter dish. You have everything against you."
— Chuck Dixon

And McDaniel could not have been a better collaborator, Dixon continued, taking everything Dixon threw at him and amping it up. "We were both working with a core Batman character in a whole new environment and took every opportunity that offered," he said. "We were each in one of those rare moments that life sometimes offers: We knew how damned lucky we were."

Devin Grayson, who followed Dixon as writer on *Nightwing* with #71, pointed to a range of qualities that make Nightwing "a wonderful character across the board." These included his physicality, which is "a dream to work with in a visual medium like comics," intelligence, integrity, and "almost crazy bravery." He is also filled with an assortment of "wonderful dichotomies," she continued: "itinerant gypsy in a blueblood mansion; carefree circus boy working the deadly urban nightscape; loyalty incarnate struggling to emerge from under his mentor's shadow; passionate and hot-blooded touch-junkie consigned to a life of secrets and isolation; gregarious punster and angst-factory; Eagle Scout with iron-clad principles and lethal training; the best, smartest, most attractive, and talented guy in his social circle; and the only one convinced he pales in comparison to the infallible splendor that is his mentor." All these traits work to create a character that people have loved, identified with, and responded to for more than 60 years, she said. But what she was most attracted to in the character was his loyalty.

"We've all dreamed about being the sidekick to a cool-ass super-hero. Dick Grayson lived that dream, and had the good sense to recognize his own fortune," she said. "He paid a huge price to train as Batman's partner, and that's an essential aspect of his characterization, but mostly he did it because he wanted to: He works from a place of respect, joy, and even awe. He sees value in the work he does, not because of the somewhat abstract value of 'stopping crime,' but because of the very immediate effect his actions have on the people he has come to love and venerate."

Nightwing's inclusion on the *Infinite Crisis* death list generated a lot of open discussion internally. While DiDio said he still thinks it was "a strong beat to go with," DC Publisher Paul Levitz indicated he never felt comfortable with it and ultimately nixed the plan.

With Nightwing being spared, DiDio then put the challenge to DC creators that, if they felt that strongly about the character, then they needed to identify his strengths and put him in a direction to which everybody could respond. One of the approaches DC took was to look back on what people identified as Nightwing's greatest period, eventually settling on Wolfman's handing of the character in *Titans*. Once Wolfman knew his schedule was open, "he jumped at the chance to do it," DiDio said.

Wolfman said DiDio told him on the phone of Nightwing's intended demise in *IC* after he had informed the writer he was doing the title for what was initially to be a four-issue arc, but that since has been extended to a year — and possibly longer. "I said it was a good thing I knew he wasn't dying, since I would have Atom-ed my way through the phone wire to strangle him. I love the character," Wolfman said.

Wolfman and his two predecessors writing the series — Dixon and Grayson — rejected DiDio's reasoning.

When handled correctly, Wolfman argued, Nightwing is a solid character with a wide range of emotions, one of the few human characters in the DC universe who is a hero.

"He's not Batman, as he's not obsessed. He's not insane. He enjoys what he does and wants to make a difference," he continued. "He's smart but not overly so. He's just a good character. That Dick won't be Batman and there is another Robin doesn't make him redundant, because it shows that characters can actually grow and change."

Also, Wolfman added, "Dan's said he was wrong about Nightwing."

"How can the first guy to wear the Robin outfit (for 50 years) be somehow obsolete?" Dixon questioned. "Dick Grayson is vital to the DC universe because he was Batman's first sidekick. In the minds of the casual public, he is Batman's *only* sidekick. As Robin, and then Nightwing, he was the leader of The Teen

Titans, which is the title that brought DC back into the market in the '80s. And, if *none* of that were true, he is vital to the DC universe because he is one of their most popular and enduring characters and the readers of DC comics enjoy him."

To assume the only meaningful arc for a character raised by Batman is that they eventually take up the mantle, "shows a surprising lack of creative imagination," commented Grayson, who also wrote *Batman: Gotham Knights*, which explored the Batman family of characters. "To assume that Dick Grayson is no longer valuable because he's neither Robin or Batman shows a truly stunning lack of interest in character development, story arcs, supporting-cast expansion, and reader retention. Fathers don't make sons redundant, nor do little brothers."

Grayson, who said she hadn't been interested in writing super-heroes before, said that that idea — Batman raising a kid — was what had interested her in the characters. "That in and of itself is a fascinating concept," she said. "That the kid in question is as distinct from Batman as he is — in terms of financial background, life experience, and natural disposition — adds an immediate and inexhaustible dramatic tension to any kind of story you want to tell about them." She added, "With the addition of the original Robin, Batman becomes a story about family, about human choice and sacrifices, about people."

Though obviously pleased that Nightwing was spared, Pérez said that, when he'd heard DiDio's reasoning, ironically, it made a lot of sense to him. One

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"To assume that Dick Grayson is no longer valuable because he's neither Robin or Batman shows a truly stunning lack of interest in character development, story arcs, supporting-cast expansion, and reader retention."
— Devin Grayson

of the things that made Nightwing distinctive was that he was the leader of The Titans, "but Dan wanted him to have a sense of importance outside of The Titans," he said. "I certainly understand that reasoning." The challenge to make Nightwing more interesting, then, is on the character's writers — including, once again, Wolfman, who had previously dealt with Nightwing in a group dynamic. "Now, he has to treat him as a solo character," said Pérez, who added that he looking forward to seeing the reaction to Wolfman's take.

However, fans anticipating Wolfman's run on *Nightwing* shouldn't expect to see the same character that led The Titans years ago. Nightwing, Wolfman acknowledged, is in a different place in his life.

"When I wrote Dick Grayson in *New Teen Titans*, he was an 18-year-old who had a major-league problem dealing with Batman. By the end of my run, that was all resolved," he explained. "Today, Dick is a 20-something character, grown up, on his own, and having to deal with the world on different terms than a kid does. Maybe he doesn't have to work, as he's probably financially independent, but he knows he should be with people, that he can't be alone with himself all the time; that way lies madness. He's gone through a series of bad relationships because of his often-uncompromising personality. He's also been fighting bad guys since he was about 9, and he's always defined himself in the company of others: first Batman and then The Titans. But now he has to know who he is without everyone else surrounding him. He's come to the realization as he grows up that he needs to work on the Dick Grayson side of his life — that to be a better Nightwing he needs to be a better man."

Wolfman said he wants to show what it's like for someone like Dick, who has done one thing all his life, to have to accept that he might have to make changes in order to grow and become the man he's destined to be. "On the other hand, I want to preserve Nightwing as a hero who loves what he does, can enjoy the adventure he's part of, and someone whose pessimism is often overshadowed by his optimism," he added. "Nightwing is an extremely competent hero, a phenomenal acrobat, and an excellent detective. My first arc — which, remember, was plotted as a four-issue fill-in — centers on all his traits. As a fill-in writer, I didn't think I could change much; my belief was that all I could do was return him to his core values and let the next writer would take it further. But now, as the regular writer for a year, I feel I can begin to have a real say on the character."

Wolfman said he is also enthusiastic about working with his artist for his first four issues, Dan Jurgens, commenting that Jurgens brings, not only solid storytelling and draftsmanship, but a strong knowledge of the character, as well. "He is also a good writer on his own, so there have been cases where he's called me and suggested a different way to do a scene," he said.

Jurgens, whose writing credits include lengthy runs on *Superman, Captain America*, and *Thor*, said that Wolfman has written "a very interesting story, and it's clear right from the start that he has a real deft touch with Dick's character and who Nightwing is," and

that Jurgens would look forward to returning to the book, if his schedule eventually allows. "Nightwing is a fun character. He's one of those characters that everyone wants to like."

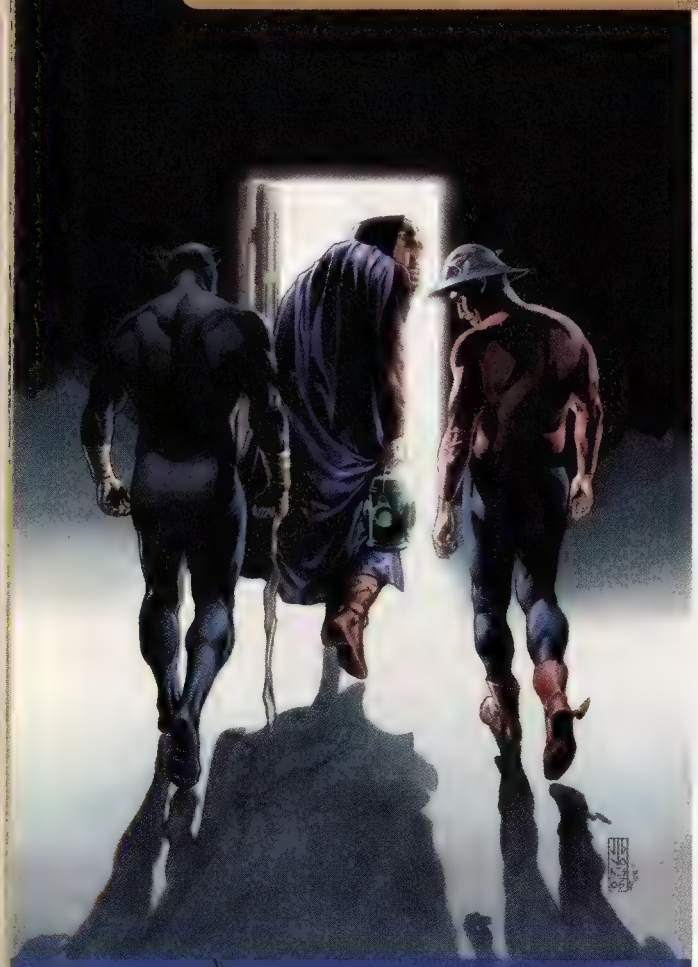
He also doesn't see the character as redundant, either as Dick Grayson or Nightwing. "I think one reason he is so popular is that he is a more humane and more human Batman," he continued, in contrast to the "single-minded, obsessed, and totally unpleasant" Batman that's been portrayed in recent years. "Some of the interesting components of Batman's character have been removed. Potentially, all of those are still there with Dick," he said.

On the artistic front, Jurgens said he and Wolfman have talked about Dick Grayson's background as an acrobat, "and that was one of the things I wanted to come out early in the book: that acrobatic quality he has."

Wolfman, who is working on building a new supporting cast for the title, said he was interested in the opportunity to write Nightwing on his own, which means exploring his character without others, such as The Titans and Starfire, defining him. "I have a lot more to say about him and always wanted to be given the chance to do so," he said. Set in New York City, the title will feature appearances by some familiar DC villains. However, Wolfman said he wants to come up with new antagonists for Nightwing and commented, "I'd rather throw him into unknown waters and see how he swims."

Grant Morrison ON 52

by **RAY SIDMAN**



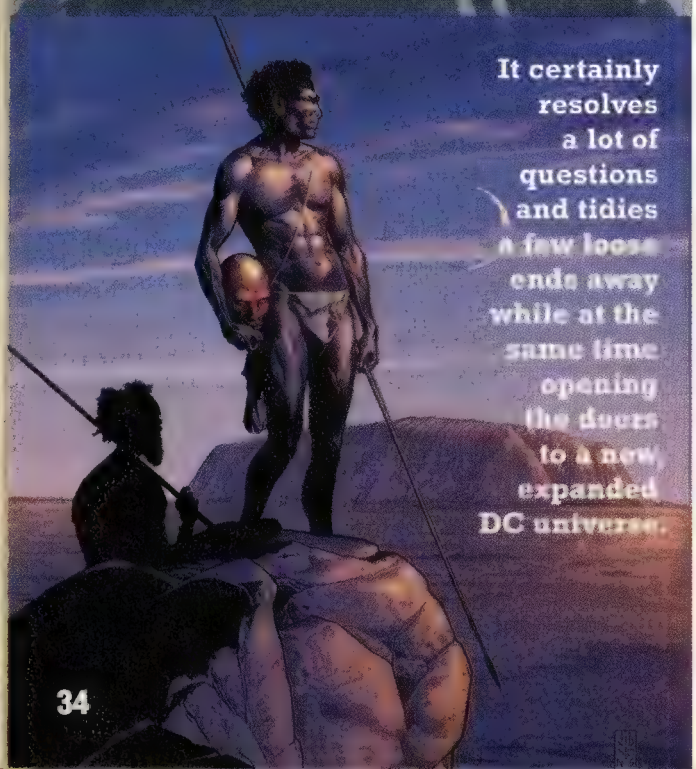
*CBG: What's your involvement in **52**?*
Grant Morrison: I'm the rhythm guitarist. Basically, I'm a quarter of the writing team, and together we create the plots and situations in *52*.

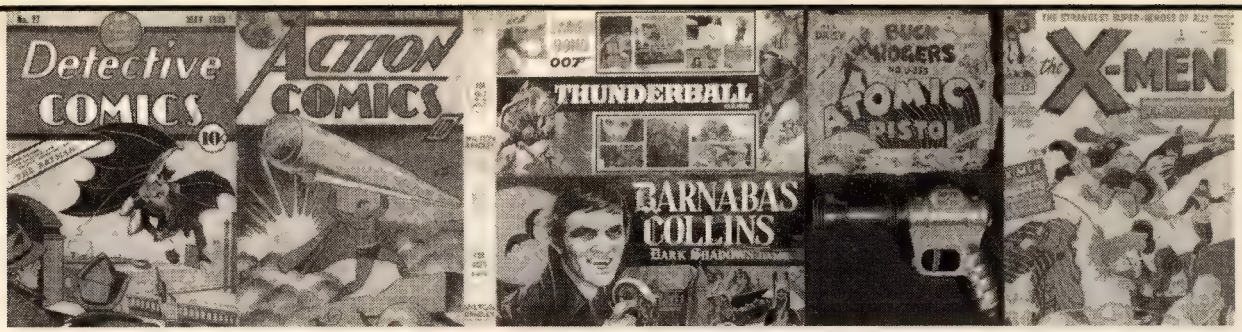
CBG: Who's your favorite character in this series?
Morrison: I like Animal Man, of course, and have a few favorites among the Great Ten but I'd have to say the character that's given me most fun to write has been Doctor Will Magnus, creator of The Metal Men. Otherwise, it's hard to pick a favorite — I know how all the stories play out and I think it's fair to say all the characters get their chance to really shine.

CBG: What's your favorite event in this series?
Morrison: So far, it's been the assembling of the Black Marvel family and the relationship between Renee Montoya and The Question. I don't know if those count as "events," but they're elements of the story which I've particularly enjoyed seeing played out.

*CBG: Considering epic DC events past and present, how pivotal is **52** to the history of the DC universe?*
Morrison: I'd say it's pretty pivotal. It certainly resolves a lot of questions and tidies a few loose ends away while at the same time opening the doors to a new, expanded DC universe.

*CBG: What do you hope readers get out of **52**?*
Morrison: A good thick story to read. It's a thousand pages of story set in the DC universe, so I'd like to think it's the kind of book you can really immerse yourself in and get involved with. It's good that it comes out every week and has that nice "bang, bang" rhythm you can count on, like a favorite television show, and it has a lot of characters and plot strands, clues to find, and connections to spot, so there's a nice interactive aspect to it.





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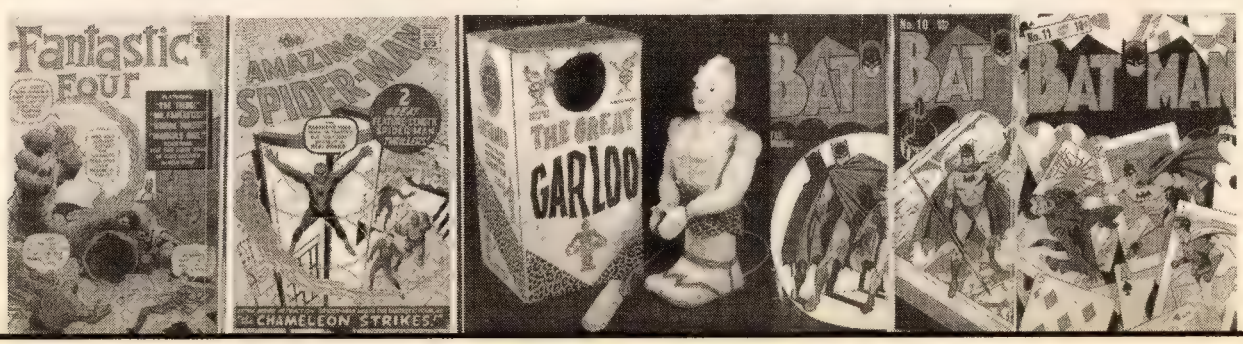
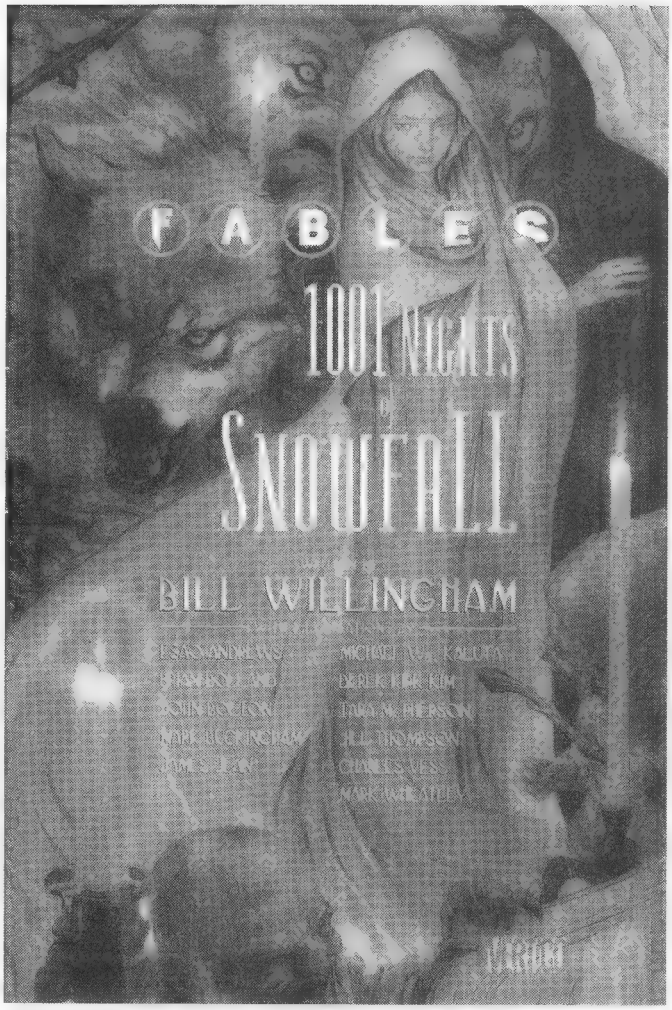




Telling Today's Tales

Fables writer Bill Willingham modernizes traditional fairy tales

by **ANDREW A. SMITH**
Contributing Editor

Bill Willingham has had a magical career.

Beginning with fantasy illustrations for *Dungeons & Dragons* rulebooks in the late '70s, magic has been a familiar element in much of his professional work.

The mystical theme was evident in *Elementals* for Comico in 1985, a magic series in super-hero drag, which he both wrote and drew. It continued with the self-published *Coventry* (set in "a small state with big magic") for Fantagraphics, *Pantheon* for Lone Star Press (dragon-slayers), two "Sandman universe" mini-series (starring Thessaly the witch) for DC's Vertigo imprint, a couple of short novels about Beowulf for Clockwork Storybook, Vertigo's *Proposition Player* (playing poker for souls), DC's *Day of Vengeance* (starring The Spectre), and DC's *Shadowpact* (a supernatural super-team). Even *Ironwood*, a raunchy work for Fantagraphics' Eros imprint, featured wizards, dragons, centaurs, demons, and djinn.

So, despite his occasional foray into super-heroes (*Green Lantern, Robin*), Willingham is the guy you'd expect to come up with *Fables* — *if* anybody expected Vertigo's breakout hit, which nobody did. *Fables* features the stars of familiar fairy tales and folklore of Western civilization, on the run from an all-conquering "Adversary" who has chased them from the magical realms to a colony in New York City. It has spawned a spin-off series (*Jack of Fables*) and a recent graphic novel (*1001 Nights of Snowfall*), the latter an anthology exploring the backgrounds of various characters, from Snow White to the Big Bad Wolf, drawn by an all-star cast of artists.

I caught up with Willingham on the telephone, and, despite the occasional intrusion by somebody else's conversation (oh, for the days of reliable land lines), he had a lot to say:

Comics Buyer's Guide: *Outside of your super-hero work, such as* ***Green Lantern*** *and* ***Elementals****, your resumé shows a lot of interest*

All images © 2006 DC Comics

in magic and magical realms. Were you bitten by a radioactive elf as a child, or something?

Bill Willingham: *(Chuckles)* That's pretty good. Y'know, I may well have been. Let's not even say "outside of *Elementals*," which was a thoroughly magic-based super-hero system. One of the things we established right away in *Elementals* was that magic powered these things, and anyone in this fictional world who could do anything of an extraordinary nature was powered by magic. So let's fold that into it, as well.

CBG: *Too bad you didn't get to work on the original Green Lantern, who was magic-based.*

Willingham: Yeah, yeah! Although the character is semi-available to me, now that I'm doing *Shadowpact*, at least as a guest appearance.

But, boy, yeah, I sure seem to do a lot of work in that field. I think what I like about it is that not only do you get to create fictional characters ... but you pretty much have to do a lot of world-building. You have to decide, "If magic works, how does this world work? What are the rules?" Even if you don't work those into a given story — I mean, a story would be pretty bland if it was just a long exposition of "this is how magic works and these are the rules we're playing under" and stuff — but, if those are in place, I think they inform a good story and make it structurally sound. And those are the sort of things I like doing. I like world-building.

CBG: ***Fables*** *is one of those ideas that seem so obvious in retrospect, but nobody thought of it until you did. What was the genesis of the series?*

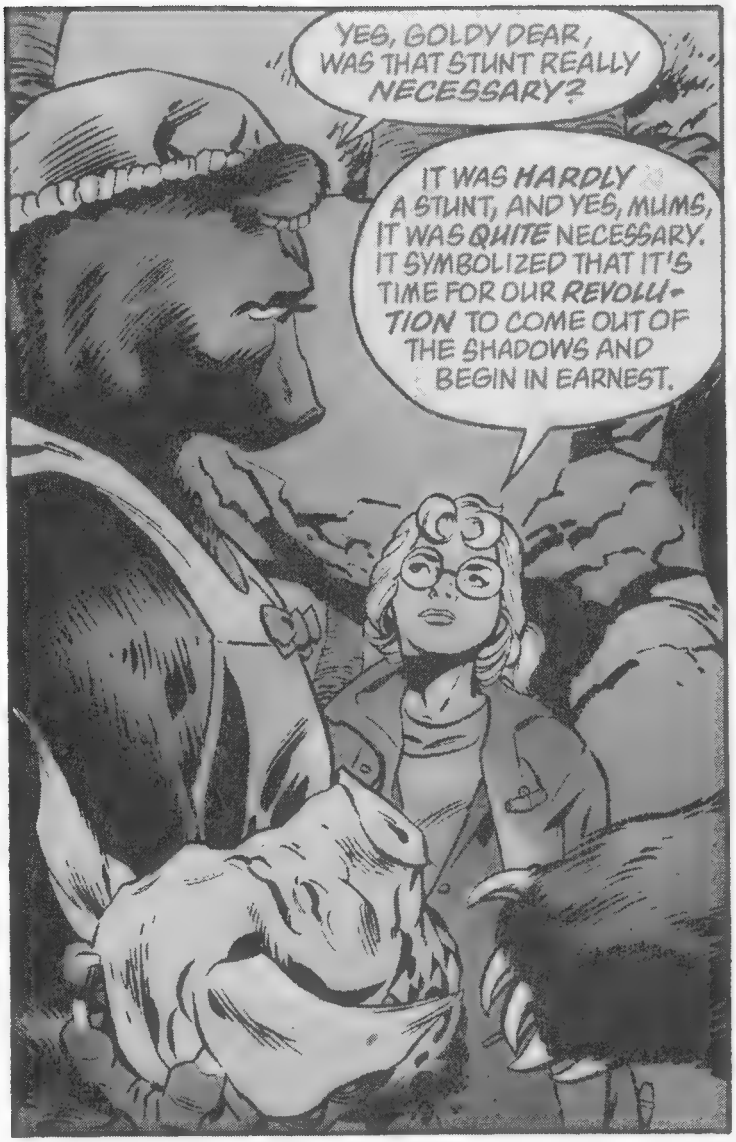
Willingham: I think I'd been circling the idea for a long time. I think there's been a lot of movement in the area similar to that. I would probably agree that no one thought of ... the specifics of the *Fables* series — but using fable and folklore characters in a more modern, updated setting, I think, has been done before in various mediums.

I'm not sure where *Fables* came from. I've always liked folklore and fairy tales — that, and mythology, formed the triumvirate of what I liked to read as a kid. And even as early as my first story, which was the *Elementals*, folklore-type characters kept intruding into the stories.

I think *Fables* itself, as a series, was just letting that other shoe fall: the realization that, OK, this is the kind of thing I'm obviously interested in, so quit trying to slip things through the door and quit doing a half-hearted job of it. Just resign yourself that this is what you're going to write about and just do it. If you look at the context of my career, I think it was fairly obvious that this was the direction I was heading in.

CBG: *How did you pitch it to DC?*

Willingham: It was kind of accidentally pitched to DC. It never occurred to me that something like *Fables* would be wanted; certainly, the DC universe, the normal super-hero universe, wouldn't be interested in something like this. And Vertigo comics — I'd done some work for them for a while then, and it just didn't seem to fit the tenor of the kind of books they liked to do. So I wasn't going to pitch it to them.



Willingham combines modern-day sensibilities with traditional fairy tales.

And I was talking to Shelly Bond, the Vertigo editor (and now the *Fables* editor), about another project entirely. If I remember correctly, we were talking about doing a series with two sassy female private eyes or something like that. It was a very Shelly Bond kind of idea. She had the idea and wanted one of her stable of writers to pitch it to her. So we were talking about that, and at some point I mentioned that I had to get going, because I was finishing up this pitch for another publisher.

And, being who she is, she immediately wanted to know what *that* was. And I gave her a quick, one- or two-sentence outline of *Fables*. And very wisely explained to her that, "As you can see, it's nothing Vertigo would want."

Willingham has "produced" a series of Fables movies in the comic book already with Jack (shown above as the giant-killer in the traditional fairy tales and below as movie producer in* Fables*) as the lead character.

(Laughter)

And she said, "Oh, no, no, no, no, you're not pitching that to anyone but me. And, since you said it's almost done, I expect it by the end of the day." *(Continuing laughter)* So I sent it in, and it was accepted really quickly. I think it really helped that Jenette Kahn was still at DC at the time, and, among her last duties she had as vice president, she was sort of the liaison between DC and Hollywood. And she got a look at the proposal and said right away that this could become a movie or TV show or something like that. So the willingness to accept the proposal was there from the start, and it was accepted pretty quickly.

Of course, I think less than a week after DC finally accepted it, the first ads for the very first *Shrek* came out. And I thought, "That's it, every idea I've ever had is in this trailer." I expected DC to call any minute and say, "Oops, you almost had it there, but you missed the boat. The idea's been done, so forget it." But no, they accepted it pretty readily and ran with it, and here we are four years later.

CBG: *Has Jenette Kahn's prediction come true? Has there been a nibble from Hollywood?*

Willingham: There have been plenty of nibbles, as a matter of fact. Jenette Kahn left DC to form Double Nickel Movie Productions, her own production company. They ran with the *Fables* movie idea for a while: Jenette and her company plus Jim Henson and Jim Henson Pictures. It got as far as looking for screenwriters to do the project.

This was all under the auspices of Warner Pictures, who were going to be the major producers of this. But Warner TV grabbed it from Warner Pictures, because there was a hotshot new writer they were wooing who was interested in coming to work for Warner TV but apparently one of his demands was, "Well, you have to let me do *Fables* as a TV series."

So they worked on that for a while, and it got as far as a pilot script being produced — which I read, and it was pretty good. The writer there was Craig Silverstein. Various networks, TV channels, whatever, passed on actually producing the pilot, so that's died. Craig went on to be the show-runner for *Standoff.* And that seems to be doing well for him. So I think, because of that, the *Fables* movie and/or TV project is dead in the water.

CBG: *It's in turnaround!*

Willingham: It's in turnaround, right. That's a wonderful term. It sounds like it's really active and something's happening with it. But it's in turnaround the same way that that poor dead dog that just got run over by a street-sweeper is in turnaround. *(Laughter)* Just as dead as dead can be.

So, yeah, there have been plenty of nibbles. DC and Warner together outright bought the rights for the movie from me. So they seem pretty determined that something will be done with it at some point.

CBG: *And you've already made your nickel from it, so you're not suffering.*

Willingham: Sure, sure. But nothing at the moment.

CBG: *Well, never say never.*

Willingham: Well, as the new movie rep from DC said, "It took 60 years to get *Lord of the Rings* made, so don't lose hope." *(Laughter)*

CBG: *But don't die any time soon!*

Willingham: Yeah! The first thought that occurred to me was, "But Tolkien didn't live to see it!" I would ... enjoy living to see whatever becomes of this. But that's just me.

CBG: *At least to see who is cast as Snow White. You'd want to know that before you kick off.*

Willingham: Well, yeah. That would be pleasant.

CBG: *I had a typical childhood and read my fair share of fairy tales — probably* ***more*** *than my fair share, since I was a comic-book and fantasy buff. But some of the fables in* ***Fables*** *are unfamiliar to me. Did you just hear more fables than I did from your childhood in Germany or do you still have to do a lot of research?*

Willingham: Let's not call it research, because that would be like I'm trying to pass

myself off as some scholar. There's even been a few whispers out there in the folklore community

CBG: *(incredulous) There's a "folklore community"?*

Willingham: There *is* a folklore community. *(Laughter)* And they use my name and "scholar" in the same sentence, and I think that's probably some sort of crime, I'm not sure. I couldn't be a scholar, because I don't have jackets with patches on the elbows and I don't smoke a pipe, so that's not possible. But what I *do* like to do is read a lot. And, since my reading from childhood until now has often been in the fairy-tale and folklore fields, now, doing *Fables*, not only am I justified in reading (whereas I used to be robbing time from other work to do it), but I'm sort of *required* to do more of it than normal to keep up with things.

CBG: *And now your books are a tax write-off.*

Willingham: Oh, sure, but they were all along. If you're in the writing/entertaining field, all of that is deductible. At least, that was always my philosophy.

CBG: *Let me ask you a chicken-or-egg question. Do you try to find fairy-tale characters to fit*

Analyzing The Adversary

(*Spoiler Warning!* Do not proceed, if you don't want to know who "The Adversary" is!)

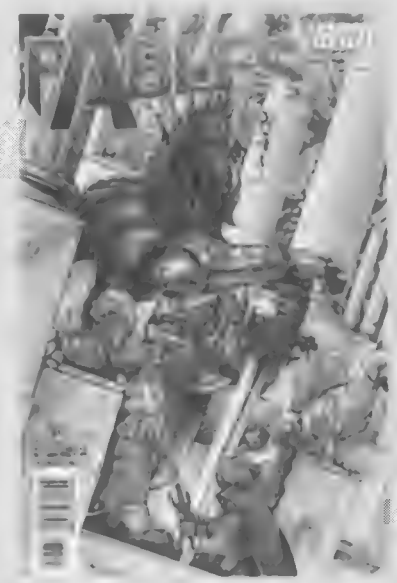
CBG: *Did you have a similar process with Geppetto, turning to the "Dark Side" even before we met him in* ***Fables****?*

Willingham: Geppetto was *fun!* ... My initial idea was to use Peter Pan as The Adversary, not only because I've enjoyed the Peter Pan story for all of my life, but it always seemed very wicked to me, in the sense that, "Don't people realize that this is a character who's coming into our world and stealing children?" *(Laughter)*

CBG: *I hope you've read* ***Lost Girls****. Or maybe you* ***shouldn't*** *read* ***Lost Girls****! (Laughter)*

Willingham: I haven't. So Peter Pan made a pretty obvious "you see the hero in him but I see the villain in him, and we're going to go with my interpretation" character. But we couldn't use him, because the Ormond Street Hospital in England still had rights to the stories, and, since we sell books in England, even though he was already in the public domain over here, we couldn't use him.

So then it was a matter of, "Well, let's look for someone else to be 'The Adversary'." And my first criterion was, "Who's the most unexpected person we can think of that hasn't appeared in *Fables* yet, or isn't going to be part of the first few story arcs?"



And Geppetto occurred to me. I reread the Pinocchio story, and found out that, unlike the Disney version, Geppetto *was* this sour, crabby old man. Which I felt was kind of serendipitous.

I thought, "This is an indication that I may be on the right track here."

And, once I figured out that he could be the ultimate puppet master — which a good emperor really is — and constantly carving these people to do his bidding and carving duplicates of local leaders, it just seemed like the most natural thing in the world. And, in hindsight, he makes a much better Adversary than Pan would have. Pan we could have gotten a few good stories out of, but the deep exploration of his character wouldn't have happened the way it has here.

So I'm rather pleased with the Ormond Street Hospital for keeping me from using the Pan characters for a while.

CBG: *... you had an Adversary picked from the beginning but had to switch gears. But it turned out well, with a puppet master using a puppet emperor. He's literally the power behind the throne and he likes it that way.*

Willingham: Have you ever seen a website called The Evil Overlord List (*www.eviloverlord.com/lists/overlord.html*), which is a funny compendium of all the big, evil villains in James Bond movies and epic fantasies and all the mistakes they make?

CBG: *Like monologuing.*

Willingham: Yes, things like that. Like, if you put all your power in one ring, *don't lose the damn ring! (Laughter)*

CBG: *Or like spending millions to make thousands robbing a bank.*

Willingham: Yes, yes! *(Laughs)* I've paid attention to that and I've gone out of my way to make sure Geppetto doesn't make the mistake of every other Evil Overlord, to the extent that very few in the empire even know that he's really the power behind the throne.

He has lots of cut-outs, lots of people doing his bidding, and he just seems to be this humble, old wood-carver up in his cottage. He gets to lead his life and set general policy but have others run the mechanism for him. And I think, if you're going to be in the Evil Overlord business, *that's* the way to do it.

CBG: *Do you have a projected ending in mind for* ***Fables*** *or will it continue indefinitely?*

Willingham: It will continue indefinitely, but I do have an ending in mind, should it ever come to a time when, either through declining readership or what-have-you, I have that last story in mind. I very much like the problem of never having to get to that last story.

the stories that you write first, or do the stories arise from the characters you already have in your head?

Willingham: Boy, that's a pretty good question.

I suspect it's a little bit of both, but it's more weighted toward the stories based on the characters I've already got who are sort of in line waiting for their chance.

One of the things we had to do to start *Fables* was use the most well-known characters. We wanted readers to catch onto the premise right away, so we used the ones that everyone knows most: Snow White, Prince Charming, Big Bad Wolf, *etc.* And those are some fine characters.

But probably my favorite ones have been some of the more obscure ones. Now that the series has been long established and has kind of gained its loyal readership, we can get away with bringing more obscure characters to the forefront.

I think the first one of what would be considered my favorite characters that aren't well-known is the character Kay from Hans Christian Andersen's "The Snow Queen." Once we had things established, we could start bringing these guys on. And there's a lot more of them. But, as a typical rule while I'm reading, I'll just read anywhere my heart takes me and then take notes, if I encounter a good character or a good story situation that can be used in *Fables* at some point.

As a result, that waiting room is getting pretty full. So we have characters waiting for a chance to get on stage, and some are more impatient than others. But we'll get to them. Definitely, the characters drive story ideas.

CBG: *Are the characters in* ***Fables*** *ever supposed to be analogs of any real people or fictional characters in other genres, or is that an idea I should forget?*

Willingham: No one's ever asked that before.

I don't *think* they're analogs of actual people. In the early days of my career, like many, I used to put effigies of people I knew into crowd scenes, for example, just before a villain dropped a building on them.

CBG: *Which made you a lot of friends.*

Willingham: Well, sure! *(Laughter)* In many ways, they didn't recognize it; it was just a little way to get my jollies as a cartoonist. And I think that's a young man's passion or vice — I hope I've outgrown that. So I don't think characters are actually based on anyone specific, like historical figures, that kind of thing. As far as literary characters — no direct correspondence. Literary *types*, perhaps.

CBG: *Archetypes, maybe.*

Willingham: Right. Not anything specific, like, "this character is my version of this beloved character from this book that I don't have the rights to use" type of thing. I shy away from that.

CBG: *Speaking of characters, you have a habit of surprising readers with which characters you use for what roles. They almost seem to defy their archetypal origins.*

For example, Snow White emerged in ***Fables*** *as a really dynamic figure almost from the outset, whereas she was little more than a passive victim in her own fable. So I would have expected someone like Cinderella, who was more aggressive and take-charge in her fable, to have that role. Or for a more traditional "hero" character like Prince Charming to be the central character. Can you give me a handle on why you picked Snow White for such a central role?*

Willingham: A couple of reasons. Some are silly and personal, in the sense that Snow White is this pale-skinned, dark-haired girl, and I've always had a weakness for pale-skinned, dark-haired girls. In addition to that, she's a well-known character.

But, then again, so is Cinderella. But ultimately it's a process of taking a look at the original tales and finding out "what kind of avenues does this lead to, especially if it's not being directed by a fairly corrupt individual who wants to see what's the most evil thing that I can do to these people?"

And Snow White, exactly as you said, was very much a victim — not just a victim of circumstance, but things happened *to* her; she didn't initiate situations. And I liked the idea that eventually, if this kind of thing kept happening, she'd overcome that. She would realize that, finally, "My fate has never fared well in other people's hands, so maybe I better take it in my own hands."

CBG: *So she had a character arc even before she was introduced.*

Willingham: Yeah. In some ways we are now in the process of going back and filling in some of those transitional periods. But, yeah, when we first see her, she is a strong — and by,

Boy Blue gives Beauty and the Beast some friendly advice after their first meeting with Snow White in* Fables *#1.

some characters' lights, overpowering — kind of force in Fabletown.

And I kind of like that. Because, in my mind, I can see the steps of how she got that way. And my guess was that the readers would be intrigued to come along to see if they could figure how she got from A to Z and all those steps in between.

CBG: *Let's move on to* ***1001 Nights of Snowfall****, the hardback collection of short stories that is in many ways, for lack of a better word, the "origin" of many of the main* ***Fables*** *characters. How long have these stories been swimming around in your head, before or after the same characters appeared in* ***Fables****?*

Willingham: Most of them before.

I knew all along what the real story was with Snow White and Bigby Wolf, for example.

The story with Frau Totenkinder: I knew most of it but, as I was writing the story, I realized that she can also be the witch for this and she can also be the witch for that. So I got to delightfully put in many more wicked-witch roles than I had initially realized she could be in. But the general idea that she was a lot of wicked witches was already there.

CBG: *You did the same with Prince Charming. Once you get in your head that he's all the Prince Charmings in all the fables with a Prince Charming, then that suggests his character. He gets around!*

Willingham: The idea of the Lothario — the hunter of women who is not very good at being the *keeper* of women — as soon as the idea that he was the husband in all of those cases arose, then the idea of Prince Charming, not the loveable rogue, sprang full-grown immediately. What took a little time was just working out the logistics of which wife occurred in what order.

And there's lots of backstories still to reveal. Prince Charming has been around for a long time, going from wife to wife, and some day, when the time is ripe, if it's ever necessary, we'll show some of the details of that. But Snow White was definitely first. Cinderella we've shown was the last one, because she's the one who helped get him out of the Homelands with his skin intact.

A lot of room in there for the whole Briar Rose-Sleeping Beauty thing to be revealed. But lots of that was right there at the beginning.

CBG: *Did you have to sell the idea of* ***1001 Nights*** *as a graphic novel to DC? It could have been a series of annuals or back-up stories. Did you have to sell them on the format?*

Willingham: No. And as a matter of fact, once again, they were the ones who came to me.

Karen Berger said, "Would you like to do a hardback *Fables*?" Almost as soon as we realized *Fables* was going to do well, comics-wise, she approached me with this — and talked about either doing a single long story with a single illustrator or a collection of stories. And I kind of split the difference, which is a collection of stories that are linked together by an overall story so that I can work with as many illustrators as possible.

CBG: *How'd you get all those guys? John Bolton, Mark Buckingham, Michael Kaluta — this is an all-star cast.*

Willingham: I don't know! I did the easy part, which is make out my wish list of ,"Ooh, I like this artist," and, "I like this artist." And poor Shelly had the unenviable task of actually contacting them and signing them up. I don't know what kind of promises she had to make; I just know that I'm terribly fortunate in the caliber of these wonderful artists that agreed to do this.

CBG: *So none of these stories were written with a specific artist in mind.*

Willingham: Well, two. We knew that series artist Mark Buckingham was going to do one of the stories from the get-go, so the "Christmas Pies" story was written with him in mind. To use his terms, "I like drawing animals, and my favorite of the animals we've drawn so far is Reynard the fox, so if there's anything you can do with him ..." So that was done with him in mind.

And the frog prince story ("A Frog's-Eye View") — we knew pretty early on that our cover artist, James Jean, was going to want to do his first interior work and that he would not be able to do a very long story. He didn't specifically request the frog prince, and I knew there was going to be a frog prince story in there, and I knew that it was going to be fairly short and fairly grim, and I knew right away that James would be perfect for this.

So those were done with those two in mind,

"We knew that series artist Mark Buckingham was going to do one of the stories from the get-go, so the 'Christmas Pies' story was written with him in mind."

"We see Prince Charming when he's making an efffort to be a better person than he ultimately is."

but the rest of them were written with the idea that, once we see what kind of story it is, we'll find the perfect artist for it. I could not be more pleased with the artists. I think they did terrific work — and carrying a humble writer on their shoulders.

CBG: *This is probably obvious to everyone but me, but what does "snowfall" in the title mean?*

Willingham: I guess it's metaphorical — I just like the play on words.

Snow White, when she's in dire straits, she's experiencing snowfall. Not quite a pun. Hopefully, it's a very insightful metaphor. But very insightful metaphors, when you break them down: Their basic component parts are just terrible puns. So "1001 Nights of Snowfall" is just 1001 nights in which Snow is in terrible jeopardy.

CBG: *And "snowdrift" wouldn't sell as many books.*

Willingham: If we had her wandering through the desert, that would be the word to go with there.

CBG: *Or pornography. Mae West famously said, "I used to be as pure as snow, but I drifted.*

Speaking of which, the underlying premise of "The Fencing Lessons" shares an unfortunate similarity to a pornographic poster drawn by Wally Wood in 1967 ("Disney Memorial Orgy"). Please, please, please tell me that you were unaware of that and/or that it wasn't lurking in the back of your head!

Willingham: I think I was sort of aware of it. I *might* have seen it. I don't know — I probably would have been aware it existed, just because he had done many ribald takes on things like that.

I definitely knew all along that the encounter with the dwarves was not a good thing from Snow's perspective and although we don't show or even outright mention what happened to Snow, I think it's pretty obvious to anyone who can put two and two together.

CBG: *It came up a pretty awful "four" for me.*

Willingham: But, no, I don't think the Wally Wood thing was in my mind. I mean, everyone has always made comments, probably in reaction to the very saccharine Disney movie, that we don't really know what was going on with the dwarves ...

CBG: *Yeah, you mention a chick living in the woods with seven guys, and the jokes just follow.*

Willingham: So, yes, all of the bad jokes about Snow White probably informed our going in that direction more than any one specific thing.

CBG: *And it turns out the usual jokes aren't very funny.*

Willingham: Well, they shouldn't be. When we go grim, we want to go grim. I'm not opposed to going comic relief. But this story wasn't the best place for it.

CBG: *Another thing that struck me about "The Fencing Lessons" is that Snow White indicates that her failed marriage to Prince Charming might be as much her fault as his — but in **Fables**, her attitude is that it was **all** his fault, and she cuts him no slack.*

*Have I misinterpreted Snow's attitude in **Fables** or was she tailoring the story for her audience?*

Willingham: I think she was tailoring the story to her audience. But I don't think that is to say that she misinterpreted her worry that she had something to do with the end of her marriage. I think it's more of a case that, if you do me wrong, there is part of me that wonders what I did to encourage it.

So I'm going to wonder what I did to encourage it and what I contributed that may have caused it. I might even speak about that to a third person, saying, "Maybe I'm partially at fault here." But then, at the point that I confront *you* (the dirty bastard who done me wrong), I'm not going to bring up all that stuff; I'm just going to say, "Here's where you done me wrong, and this is what you have to answer for." So I don't think it's out of character.

CBG: *Maybe just another side of her character.*

Willingham: Yeah. If he would want to bring up that, "It wasn't my sleeping with your sister; it was that thing that we never talk about that preceded it," that argument ...

Y'know, I suspect at some level, Prince Charming realizes she did do what she did in "Fencing Lessons," and it did put a strain on things, but he did sleep with her sister. And there's no book of law or book of morality that says, "You're justified in sleeping with someone's sister, if she does something that almost starts but narrowly avoids a war." *(Laughter)*

CBG: *Also, Prince Charming doesn't seem like such a bad sort in "The Fencing Lessons," whereas he's a smarmy cad and relentless womanizer in **Fables**. Should we draw the conclusion that his failed marriage to Snow somehow turned him into what he is today — or was*

he already that way and it just wasn't pertinent to show in this story?

Willingham: I don't think we saw that aspect. And, at this point in his life, remember that this is his first marriage. He probably was a womanizer beforehand, and we see hints of that with his relationship with the three ladies at court while he's waiting to see his dad. So we know he was, indeed, a womanizer.

But I suspect that at this point he still thought that, "OK, now that I'm married, I can, indeed, settle down and I can make a go of this." He's yet to discover that the womanizing is so intrinsic to his character that he can't stop. We see him when he's making an effort to be a better person than he ultimately is.

CBG: *Sort of his origin, as well. Speaking of which, there's some naughty stuff there. There's also some violent stuff, some disturbing stuff in this book — the fates of Flycatcher's family, and Old King Cole's family, for example, shocked even this jaded old fanboy. Not to mention the histories of Frau Totenkinder and Bigby Wolf. The book is definitely not for the kiddies.*

So do you worry that the Bluenosed Mothers of America or somebody is going to march on your studio for your adult take on childhood fairy tales?

Willingham: No, but they're entirely welcome. And, if they're going to do it, now's the time to march, because it's one of the few times my studio is actually clean enough to receive visitors.

But every *Fables* issue is plainly marked for mature audiences. The intended audience is older, so the premise that these stories are for kids, I don't accept.

Children's stories are kind of a new invention in our society and our culture. Probably even by the late Middle Ages, the distinction that some stories are just for kids is a fairly new idea.

CBG: *Well, the original fairy tales were meant to teach lessons in really horrific fashion. There were wolves eating people and terrible things happening to scare kids into behaving.*

Willingham: They were absolutely grim and they were exactly what you said: lessons in behavior. My favorite being "Hansel and Gretel," with the implied threat there being, "You kids behave, or we might become the kind of parents that drop our kids off in demon-haunted forests. So, aren't you lucky?"

Even worse than that: It's like, "If you kids don't behave, this character is going to bake you up in a pie and serve you to your daddy when he gets home." Which appears in so many different fairy tales that it was apparently just a standard thing.

They're all pretty grim tales.

With *Fables* we try to capture that. The very first issue of *Fables*, prominently — because it was written in blood on the wall — said, "No more happily ever after." With blood on the wall, the readership has been duly warned that this is not your Disney-type story. *(Laughter)* That said, I think it's grim and it's dire and it's terrible without being cynical, in the sense that at no point are we saying that, *because* all these horrible things happen to these characters, basically the whole world is horrible. It's not nihilistic in any way.

So what I'm saying is what incredible characters these are that they're able to overcome such bad things in their lives and still rise out of it — and, in many cases, rise out of it as pretty decent people.

Flycatcher is the best example. He went through the worst, it looks like, at least from the *1001 Night* stories. But he is still sort of the best of the bunch: still an innocent, still a decent guy.

CBG: *But a little dotty.*

Willingham: A little dotty because of what happened to him, you bet.

CBG: *Ultimately, then, it's a story of heroism: The bigger the obstacles, the more heroic it is to rise above them.*

By the way, I wanted to ask you about Frau Totenkinder's name, which I'd never heard before ***Fables****. I know just enough German that the first time I heard it, I knew exactly who she was. Just a great name.*

Is it an original creation or does it come out of folklore?

Willingham: No, it's my creation. I tried to find any version of "Hansel and Gretel" in which the witch was named. The closest I could come to it is what we were using before I finally named her, "The Black Forest Witch." But there were various stories coming up where people were having conversations with her and you couldn't call her by that kind of title.

She was a German witch; we knew that

One of* Fables' *more compelling story arcs involved an attack on Fabletown by a group of wooden soldiers.

Willingham's first* Fables *story arc set the tone of the series from the first issue with its "No More Happily Ever After" message.

because she lived in the Black Forest. And "Hansel and Gretel" is basically a German fairy tale.

And I like names to mean something. Whenever I meet people with interesting names, the first thing I ask them is, "What does that name mean in whatever language it came from?" (I don't always get a satisfactory answer.) In naming such an important character, I thought she had to have a decent name. And Totenkinder seemed obvious.

CBG: *Is there anything about* ***1001 Nights*** *that you'd like to mention as a selling point?*

Willingham: I don't think we need to "sell" this to readers of *Fables*, people who already know. Either they are going to pick up the graphic novel or not.

But for those people who *haven't* read *Fables*, this was specifically designed to be a stand-alone. There are more than 50 issues of *Fables* out, all in collections now, so if you want to read all of those, that's great. But if you want to pick up just *1001 Nights of Snowfall*, it's a pretty self-contained story. Everything you need to know to derive full satisfaction from the stories is in the book itself. You don't have homework to do before you can read and enjoy this.

I hope that those sitting on the fence will keep that in mind, if they're considering picking this up.

CBG: *You're also doing a spin-off called* ***Jack of Fables***

Can you tell me how many fables this ***particular*** *Jack is the Jack of?*

Willingham: Let's see if I can remember them all.

He's Jack of the beanstalk.

He's Jack the giant-killer.

He's Jack Frost. Issues #6 and #7 show how he became Jack Frost.

He's Jack of the Lantern, or Jack O'Lantern.

He is most of the Jacks from nursery rhymes, like Jack be nimble, Jack be quick. He's Jack of "Jack and Jill" fame. He's little Jack Horner who sat in the corner.

He's the Jack of the Appalachian Jack stories, which are pretty obscure and also called the Mountain Jack stories. Basically, Appalachian Jack is a trickster kind of character who keeps encountering the devil and outfoxing the devil. We saw a little bit of that in the Civil War Jack story.

We know that he's not Jack Sprat, because Jack Sprat was this tall, lanky, skinny guy. And he's not Jack Ketch, which is a generic term for an executioner.

Other than that he's just about every Jack possible.

CBG: *He's not Spring-Heel Jack, is he?*

Willingham: I'm tempted to say no, but I'll bet, if we put our mind to it, we could come up with a way that he is. He's as many Jacks as we can possibly make him.

CBG: *Any other projects you'd like to mention?*

Willingham: One of the things we're going to do is, as with *1001 Nights*, we're always going to have one special *Fables* project in the works at all times. So we've just started work on the next one, and I'm not going to tell you anything about it, other than that some of the responses I get from readers so far is that they hope that we're not just going to do *1001 Nights* and that's it — it's over.

So I want to reassure them that there will *always* be one extra-special *Fables* project in the works at all times.

CBG: *Which probably means another Willingham interview in the future.*

Andrew Smith, who has been writing professionally about comics since 1992, can be reached at ***capncomics@aol.com*** *or on his message board,* ***www.captaincomics.us****.*

It could happen...

The enemies of your collectibles are always lurking: fire, hurricanes, floods, theft, tornadoes. Thousands of these treasures are lost to collectors each year. Every collector needs a "Comfort Zone" of protection. That's our job. Your homeowners insurance is rarely enough to cover your valuable collectibles. Count on CIA for wide-ranging, inexpensive coverage. Contact us today!

What would happen if...

*Thousands of fine people lost their lifetime hobbies in the 2004 hurricane season. Collectibles ranging from stamps and autographs of famous people, to wonderful model railroad layouts and glass figurines were sadly destroyed. Did insurance help many of these victims? In too many cases, the answer was, "**NO.**"*

I've been a collector all of my life—even before I became the owner of a firm that specializes in providing insurance for thousands of collectibles. I know what it's like to lose the treasures of a lifetime hobby. Here's a lesson I learned that I'd like to pass along to you: Homeowners insurance is rarely, if ever, adequate for collectibles. Take a minute now and call, write or e-mail us for brochures that can help your peace of mind.

Dan Walker

- **Sample collector rates:** $3,000 for $12, $10,000 for $40, $25,000 for $106, $50,000 for $216, $100,000 for $316, $200,000 for $476. Above $200,000, rate is $1.60 per $1,000.
- **Our insurance carrier** is AM Best's rated A+ (Superior).
- **We insure comic books of all kinds (from Golden Age to the latest publications) and scores of other collectibles.** "One-stop" service for practically everything you collect.
- **Replacement value.** We use expert/professional help valuing collectible losses. Consumer friendly service: Our office handles your loss—you won't deal with a big insurer who doesn't know collectibles.
- **Detailed inventory** and/or professional appraisal not required. Collectors list items over $5,000, dealers no listing required.
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The Blurbs!

by RAY SIDMAN

PVP: The Animated Series coming in February

On his blog at *ucucu.pvponline.com*, Scott Kurtz announced that, on Feb. 1, *PvP: The Animated Series* will make its debut on that comics website, based on the cult favorite comic *PvP*. Each month, visitors can see a new four- to six-minute episode via subscription service.

Those who subscribe by Jan. 1 can purchase a year's subscription for $19.95. After that date, a year's subscription will be $29.95.

Kurtz said the project has been in the works for five months, "and keeping this a secret has been murderous." It started when he and Kris Straub began *PvP* Blammations as "a fun experiment." With that, the two decided they wanted to do more.

The two then brought Ryan Sohmer, Randy Waxman, and Blind Ferret Entertainment into the mix. After some discussion, the project moved forward.

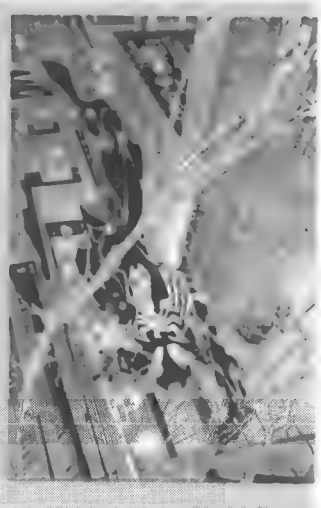
Kurtz added, "You have never seen this quality level in animation with a webcomic series before."

A preview clip from the series appears on the site.

Spidey's back in black!

Spider-Man will return to his darker self this February with the return of his black costume in the 14-part crossover "Back in Black." In the announcement, Marvel said Spidey "finds himself donning one of the most controversial costumes ever as he goes underground and back to his black duds."

The event will span *Amazing Spider-Man* #539-542, *Friendly Neighborhood Spider-Man* #17-21, and *Sensational Spider-Man* #35-39. Moreover, Marvel will release a one-shot titled *Spider-Man: Back in Black Handbook* and a *Back in Black* poster by Angel Medina.



The crossover will be handled by the ongoing creative teams on each title: J. Michael Straczynski and Ron Garney on *Amazing*, Peter David and Todd Nauck on *Friendly*, and Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa and Angel Medina on *Sensational*.

CBG #1628, shipping in early February, will have more information on the event — as well as an exclusive Spider-Man cover showcasing the new costume.

Images ©2006 Marvel Characters Inc.

Court denies Lee motions, trial to proceed

Rome, Ga., dealer Gordon Lee is heading for trial — again. The court has denied motions to dismiss the latest round of charges against the comic book retailer. The Comic Book Legal Defense Fund, which is handling Lee's defense, has announced that it expects the trial to begin in early 2007.

Lee is fighting the third round of charges brought against him since the incident on Halloween 2004, when a copy of *Alternative Comics* #2 allegedly was accidentally distributed to a minor.

New York Comic Con to host anime awards

Adding to the event list for its second annual show, the New York Comic Con announced it will play host to the inaugural American Anime Awards. The ceremony is slated for Feb. 24 at the New Yorker Hotel, located in midtown Manhattan.

Fans can vote for their award favorites during January, and the five nominees with the most votes in each of the 12 categories will become nominees. Nominees will be announced Feb. 5.

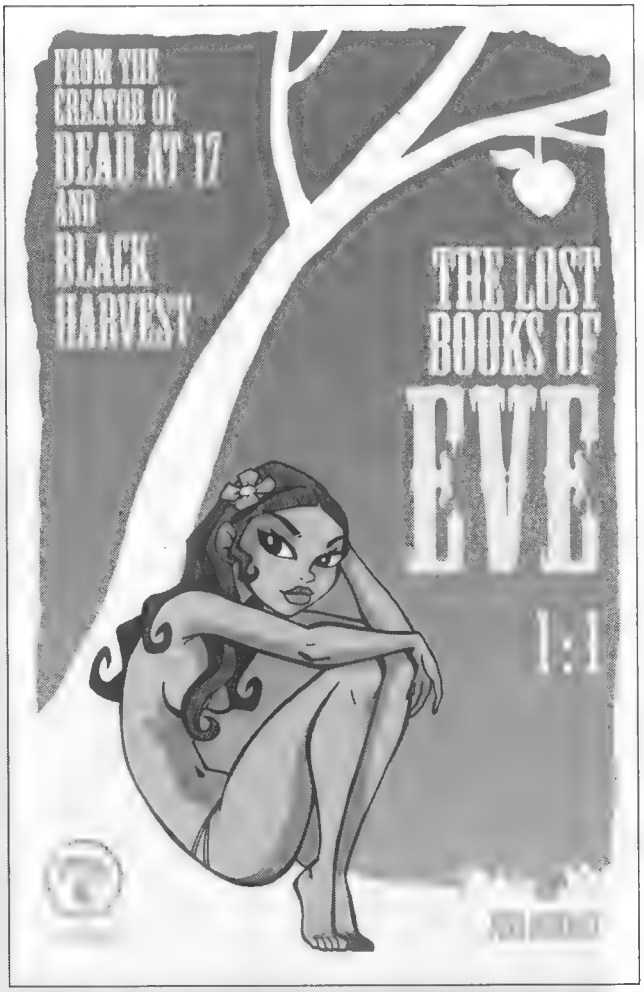
Celebrities making presentations will be include recognized voice actors, directors, and other professionals. The ceremony will be streamed live online at *IGN.com*.

Viper previews latest Josh Howard project

Viper Comics has released a preview of the new *The Lost Books of Eve*, the latest project from writer-artist Josh Howard. The project combines the Garden of Eden with magic and mythology in a way the publisher dubbed, "the fun and adventure of *Samurai Jack* mixed with the epic scope of *Lord of the Rings*."

The bimonthly title shipped in November, and #2 is slated for release in January.

Below is a three-page preview from the first issue.



Images ©2006 Viper Comics

War Fix earns Top 10 honors

NBM Publishing's *War Fix*, part of its ComicsLit line this year, has been named among the best books of 2006 by two organizations.

The editors at Amazon.com have placed the book on its Top 10 list of the best graphic novels of 2006. The American Library Association's Young Adult Library Services Association has nominated the book on the organization's list of Great Graphic Novels. That list includes two other NBM books: *The Case of Madeleine Smith* and *Trailers*.

War Fix is an autobiographical story by journalist David Axe, who writes about his addiction to viewing war up-close and first-hand during his multiple trips into battle zones with military troops in Iraq since the U.S. occupation started in 2003. The book is illustrated by Steve Olexa.

New Drizzt in February from DDP

The February solicitations from Devil's Due Publishing will feature two different books featuring the Forgotten Realms favorite drow (dark elf), Drizzt Do'urden, as well as the conclusion to the fourth *G.I. Joe vs. Transformers* series.

The Legend of Drizzt Vol. IV: The Crystal Shard will be available in a 144-page hardcover with dust jacket, while the fifth volume, *Streams of Silver*, will start its three-issue bimonthly run.

DDP will also release *G.I. Joe vs. Transformers IV: Black Horizon* #2, the conclusion of the mini-series in a 48-page issue.

Other offerings from DDP in February are the *killer 7* trade paperback, the *G.I. Joe: America's Elite Vol. III — In Sheep's Clothing* trade paperback, and *Eberron: Eye of the Wolf — Collector's Edition*.

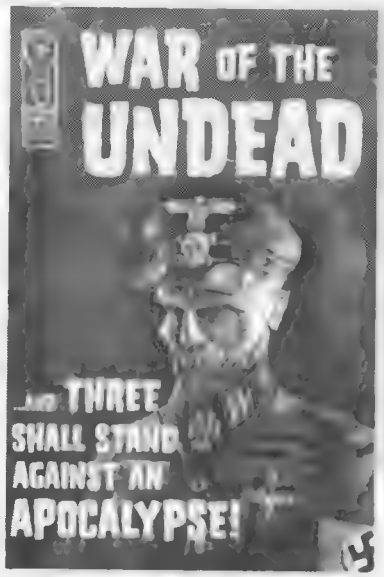


Image ©2006 IDW Publishing

IDW launches *War of the Undead*

When the Nazis come up with a new plan to win World War II, the result is *War of the Undead*, an upcoming three-part series from IDW Publishing. Creators Bryan Johnson and Walter Flanagan — the team behind the comic-book mini-series Karney — have written what IDW has dubbed a "blackly comic venture."

The story takes place in 1945 in East Germany following the suicide of Adolf Hitler. A group of Nazis hatch a plan to bring Hitler's soul back from Hell and put it into an earth-bound vessel.

The first 32-page issue hits stands in January.

Cuti film gets debut

Nov. 12 marked the first showing of Grub, a film from comics creator Nick Cuti, known for his work on *E-Man*, *Moonie*, and *Space: 1999*. The premiere was held in Tampa, Fla., at the Doubletree Hotel Film Festival. Cuti said the science-fiction film had taken two years to complete and been done with the assistance of Zodiac Comics creator and publisher Henry Kujawa handling special effects.

Cuti added that the film's DVD is still in production.

McLauchlin joins Platinum

Jim McLauchlin has joined Platinum Studios as the editor in chief of its Print and Online Comic Book Division. Previously, he had been with Top Cow Productions for two years. McLauchlin cited "the growth of Platinum Studios over the past few years," adding that he looks forward to the company's opportunities.

Platinum President and Chief Operating Officer Brian Altounian stated, "Jim brings a wealth of experience of writing and editing comics to the already strong team at Platinum." Platinum was founded by Scott Rosenberg in 1997, and the firm has specialized in marketing comics characters in other venues. The first production of its comics and graphic publishing division was the September 2006 online release of the graphic novel *Cowboys & Aliens*, which was scheduled to release to the direct market in December.

Atomic Comics hit by car

By Brent Frankenhoff

Halloween tricks started early for Atomic Comics, an Arizona comics chain, when a 16-year-old crashed her car into the front of the store's Mesa, Ariz., location at 9 a.m. Oct. 31.

According to store owner Mike Malve, the incident happened about an hour before the store, located at 1120 S. Country Club Drive, had been scheduled to open for the day. In a story at Newsarama.com, Malve wrote, "The store alarm went off and they [the female driver was accompanied by a 19-year-old male] pulled their car out of the wreckage and left the scene of the crime. Within minutes we received a call from our alarm company. We called the store manager, Julian, who was on his way to the shop. He then called us back at the offices about 10 minutes later, frantic, and saying it was a war zone at the shop."

Malve and another employee arrived at the store about 40 minutes later to find a number of police and fire vehicles on the scene. According to reports, the car had struck a water main, which took the city about a half-hour to close, flooding the store ankle-deep in water and damaging or destroying approximately 90% of the stock.

Malve said that, while a team removed the water later that day, the moisture and humidity had taken their toll. At the end of the year, he was examining options for the store with his insurance company but said he planned to rebuild and reopen.

Wood doing comic he's "always wanted to do"

Images ©2006 IDW Publishing

Ashley Wood described his new project, *D'Airain Adventure*, as "the comic I've always wanted to do." The series, which will make its debut courtesy of IDW Publishing in January, "will consist of a series of overlapping stories and vignettes," IDW announced, adding that the characters will include such familiar Wood creations as Les Mort 13 and Popbot.

The first issue will contain 32 pages of story, no ads, and front and back cover flaps.

The series is being produced with the assistance of Wood's wife, comics writer T.P. Louise, and IDW's Chris Ryall, who will contribute the five-page ongoing story "Black Magick" in each issue.

Heroic announces *Liberty Girl* sellout

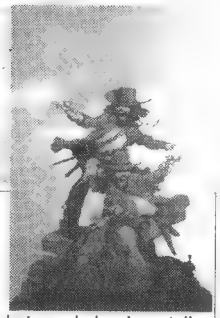
Heroic Publishing has announced that the second issue of its *Liberty Girl* series has sold out prior to its newsstand sale date, due to orders from Diamond Comic Distributors and Ingram Periodicals. The print run for #2 was 2,000.

The title, written by Dennis Mallonee with art by Mark Sparacio, features the super-heroine who the publisher has dubbed, "America's bronze goddess of freedom."

Images ©2006 Heroic Publishing

Databank

New comics sales for October 2006



Diamond sales
Top comics *ordered* by retailers

Comics shops ordered more than **6.1 million comic books** from **Diamond Comic Distributors** in October, even with where they were in the same month in 2005. Those comics were worth **$19.06 million**, up 5% from the same month in 2005.

Adding **all** comics, trade paperbacks, and magazines sold by Diamond, the total grows to **$30.59 million**, up 5% from the same month in 2005.

Orders shown below are **estimates:**

	Comic Book	Price	Publisher	Orders
1	New Avengers #24	$2.99	Marvel	136,700
2	52 #22	$2.50	DC	108,600
3	52 #23	$2.50	DC	107,900
4	52 #24	$2.50	DC	107,400
5	Civil War Front Line #7	$2.99	Marvel	106,500
6	52 #25	$2.50	DC	106,300
7	Wolverine #47	$2.99	Marvel	106,200
8	Justice #8	$3.50	DC	103,800
9	Wolverine Origins #7	$2.99	Marvel	103,200
10	Ultimate Power #1	$2.99	Marvel	102,600
11	Uncanny X-Men #479	$2.99	Marvel	89,000
12	Fantastic Four #540	$2.99	Marvel	88,900
13	Civil War X-Men #4	$2.99	Marvel	88,600
14	Wildcats #1	$2.99	DC	82,500
15	Superman Batman Annual #1	$3.99	DC	81,900
16	X-Men #192	$2.99	Marvel	81,800
17	Captain America #23	$2.99	Marvel	81,300
18	Ultimate Spider-Man #101	$2.99	Marvel	78,900
19	Action Comics #844	$2.99	DC	78,800
20	Civil War Choosing Sides #	$3.99	Marvel	74,600
21	Ultimate X-Men #75	$3.99	Marvel	73,800
22	Ms Marvel #8	$2.99	Marvel	62,900
23	Detective Comics #824	$2.99	DC	62,400
24	Flash Fastest Man Alive #5	$2.99	DC	61,500
25	Ultimate Fantastic Four #35	$2.99	Marvel	61,200
26	Heroes For Hire #3	$2.99	Marvel	60,700
27	Authority #1	$2.99	DC	58,100
28	Giant Size Wolverine #1	$4.99	Marvel	55,400
29	X-Men Phoenix Warsong #2	$2.99	Marvel	54,700
30	Sensational Spider-Man #31	$2.99	Marvel	51,600
31	Ghost Rider #4	$2.99	Marvel	50,900
32	Daredevil #90	$2.99	Marvel	50,500
33	Incredible Hulk #99	$2.99	Marvel	47,900
34	Gen 13 #1	$2.99	DC	47,500
35	Amazing Spider-Girl #1	$2.99	Marvel	47,300
36	FN Spider-Man #13	$2.99	Marvel	46,300
37	Green Lantern Corps #5	$2.99	DC	43,500
38	X-Factor #12	$2.99	Marvel	42,900
39	Supergirl & Losh #23	$2.99	DC	41,500
40	Seven Soldiers #1	$3.99	DC	41,300
41	Annihilation #3	$2.99	Marvel	41,300
42	Doctor Strange Oath #1	$2.99	Marvel	40,300
43	New X-Men #31	$3.99	Marvel	39,200
44	Ion #7	$2.99	DC	38,800
45	Nightwing #125	$2.99	DC	38,500
46	Trials of Shazam #3	$2.99	DC	38,400
47	Outsiders #41	$2.99	DC	36,700
48	Secret Six #5	$2.99	DC	36,600
49	Tales of the Unexpected #1	$3.99	DC	35,500
50	Star Wars Legacy #4	$2.99	Dark Horse	34,300

Source: *Diamond Comic Distributors, Comics & Games Retailer magazine*

The HEAT-meter
Top comics *sold* by retailers

Whereas the list on the left represents what comic books retailers **ordered and received**, the rankings below represent what retailers **said they sold**, in reports to ***CBG***. While not as exact as order data, this ranking shows those titles that are performing better in shops than their orders would indicate. **DC's *Loveless* #12** for example, came in 134th in orders for the month, but 39th in actual retailer sales.

Some titles listed below actually shipped the previous month but were still being reported as strong sellers.

1	52	26	Justice League of America
2	Civil War: Front Line	27	Boys
3	New Avengers	28	Batman
4	Justice	29	Ghost Rider
5	Ultimate Power	30	Heroes for Hire
6	Fantastic Four	31	Desolation Jones
7	Captain America	32	DMZ
8	Wolverine	33	Ultimates 2
9	Wolverine: Origins	34	Green Lantern Corps
10	Civil War: X-Men	35	Seven Soldiers
11	Uncanny X-Men	36	Ultimate X-Men
12	Civil War: Choosing Sides	37	Eternals
13	Detective Comics	38	Doctor Strange: The Oath
14	Superman/Batman Annual	39	Loveless
15	Action Comics	40	Daredevil
16	Wildcats	41	CW: YA & Runaways
17	Civil War	42	Green Arrow
18	Flash: The Fastest Man Alive	43	Tales of the Unexpected
19	Authority	44	X-Men: Phoenix — Warsong
20	Ultimate Spider-Man	45	Jack of Fables
21	X-Men	46	Batman: Legends ot DK
22	Amazing Spider-Man	47	Supergirl & LoSH
23	Fables	48	Ultimate Fantastic Four
24	Ms. Marvel	49	X-Factor
25	Anita Blake: Vampire Hunter	50	Cable/Deadpool

Source: *Comics & Games Retailer magazine*

The scoreboard
Publisher market shares

The first two tables below break down retailer orders for the Top 300 comics sold by Diamond, exclusive of trade paperbacks.

The table on the right represents the share of all publications Diamond sold, capturing comics not in the Top 300, trade paperbacks, and magazines (whether or not they contain comics).

Share of Top 300 Comics (in units)		Share of Top 300 Comics (in dollars)		Share of ALL publications (in dollars)	
Publisher	Share	Publisher	Share	Publisher	Share
Marvel	45.79%	Marvel	45.96%	Marvel	37.75%
DC	39.60%	DC	37.97%	DC	34.24%
Image	3.23%	Image	3.61%	Image	4.44%
Dynamic	2.62%	Dynamic	2.63%	Dark Horse	3.51%
Dark Horse	2.43%	Dark Horse	2.45%	Tokyopop	2.15%
IDW	1.56%	IDW	1.95%	Dynamic	1.97%
Devil's Due	0.65%	Devil's Due	0.88%	IDW	1.82%
Archie	0.50%	Virgin	0.48%	Wizard	1.73%
Virgin	0.50%	Bongo	0.45%	Viz	1.56%
Bongo	0.46%	Gemstone	0.44%	Devil's Due	0.80%

Source: *Diamond Comic Distributors, Comics & Games Retailer magazine*

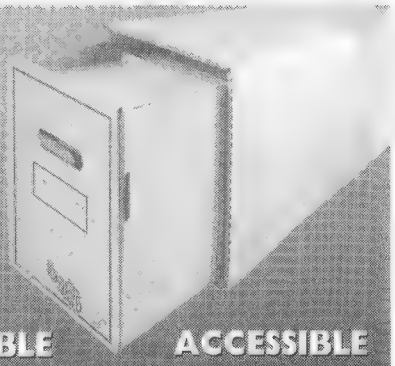
For more on industry sales trends, visit the **Knowledge Base** forum at
www.cbgxtra.com

"Comic boxes that are strong, stackable, and slide open like a file drawer. They're quite possibly the most promising comic storage product since the plastic bag..."
-- Peter Bickford, ComicBase

"I must say that I am very impressed with them...I love being able to more easily get at my collection."
-- Jeff Schultz, Collector

This is what some of our customers are saying about us...

"...I am VERY satisfied. I did a little test by filling up four of the boxes with comics and stacking all four of them on top of the fifth empty box. Let it sit for a week...NO sign of buckling and the drawer in the fifth box slides in and out just as easy as the top box. I am simply amazed."
--Kevin Manning, Collector



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- We custom manufacture our own extra heavy-duty corrugated cardboard to ensure the highest crush test rating of any box made. Period. Stronger than plastic or even 300 lb. test cardboard!
- Handles reinforced with 4 layers of cardboard to ensure the drawer fronts are durable and withstand pulling.
- Double wall construction ensures maximum stacking strength.
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COMICS IN YOUR FUTURE

Comics shipping information is taken from publisher and distributor solicitations and updates and is as accurate as possible at presstime. Items marked with a ✪ have been rescheduled from an earlier calendar.

ON SALE IN JANUARY 2007

A WAVE BLUE WORLD INC
Adrenaline #3, $2.99

A.D. VISION
Angel Dust Neo Manga One Shot TPB, $10.95
Cromartie High School Manga Vol. 9 TPB, $10.95

A-10 COMICS
Damaged Files #1, $2.99

AC COMICS
Femforce #139, $6.95
Men of Mystery #64, $9.95

ACTIVE IMAGES
Tim Sale Pinups SC, $20.00

ADHOUSE BOOKS
My Own Little Empire GN, $9.95

AFTERBURN COMICS
Blood & Roses Majestic Collesction Ltd Ed HC, $19.99
Blood & Roses Majestic Collesction TPB, $19.99

ALIAS
Pistolfist Revolutionary Warrior #3, $3.50

ALTERNATIVE COMICS
Red Eye Black Eye GN, $19.95

AMERICAN MULE ENTERTAINMENT
Public Enemy #3, $2.99

ANTARCTIC PRESS
Dinowars Jurassic War of the Worlds #2, $3.50

ARCHIE

Archie meets NASCAR when Mr. Lodge sponsors a car driven by Betty in the Riverdale 500 in *Archie* **#572,** scheduled to ship Jan. 17.

JAN. 4
Archie & Friends #106, $2.25
Betty & Veronica Double Digest #148, $3.69

JAN. 10
Tales From Riverdale Digest #17, $2.49
Veronica #177, $2.25

JAN. 17
***Archie* #572, $2.25**
Archie Double Digest #176, $3.69

JAN. 24
Betty #162, $2.25
Jughead and Friends Digest #17, $2.49
Pals 'n' Gals Double Digest #109, $3.69
Sonic The Hedgehog #171, $2.25

JAN. 31
Betty & Veronica Digest #172, $2.49
Jugheads Double Digest #128, $3.69
Sabrina Vol. 2 #82, $2.25

Gold Digger #81, $2.99
Gold Digger 15 Year Anniversary Special #2, $4.95
Gold Digger Sourcebook: Official Handbook To The Gold Digger Universe #2, $3.95
Ninja High School #146, $2.99
Pirates vs. Ninjas #1, $3.50

APE ENTERTAINMENT
Magnitude #2, $3.50
Nightmare World #1, $3.50

ARCADE COMICS
Youngblood Maximum Collection Vol. 1 HC, $34.99

ARCANA STUDIO
Dragons Lair #4, $3.95
Gearhead #1, $3.95
Outlaw Scorn 3030 Ad #3, $2.99
Power of the Valkyrie #3, $3.95

ARES ENTERTAINMENT
Mars One #1, $4.00

ASPEN
Fathom Kiani #0, $2.50
Fathom Kiani #0 Michael Turner Sgn Ed, $24.99

AVATAR
Escape of the Living Dead Annual #1, (six covers $4.99)
Garth Ennis Chronicles of Wormwood #1, (two covers $3.99)
Lady Death Blacklands #4, (five covers $3.99, spec. ed. $9.99)
Lady Death Sacrilege #0, (five covers $2.99, spec. ed. $9.99)
Lady Death Warrior Temptress, (six covers $3.99, spec. ed. $9.99, leather ed. $24.99)

BANDAI
Eureka Seven Vol. 4 GN, $9.99

BARBOUR PUBLISHING
Hits & Misses Vol. 1 GN, $4.97
Life Camera Action Vol. 1 GN, $4.97

BASEMENT COMICS/AMRYL ENTERTAINMENT
Cavewoman Jungle Jam Sp Ed #2, $8.95
Cavewoman Reloaded #4, $3.95
Mike Hoffman Island of the Tiki Goddess #1, $2.95
Mike Hoffman Octavia Monster Sketchbook, $2.95

BLACK INC! IMPRINTS
Roach #3, $2.95

BLOODFIRE STUDIOS
Utopiates #2, $2.95

BLUE DREAM STUDIOS
Dreamland Chronicles Vol. 1 TPB, $19.95

BLUE LINE ART
Mitch Byrd SCribbles & Sketches Vol. 1 SC, $19.99 ✪

BONGO COMICS
Futurama Comics #29, $2.99
Simpsons Classics #11, $3.99
Simpsons Comics #126, $2.99

BOOM! STUDIOS
Fall of Cthulhu Mavlian #0, (two covers $3.99)
Hero Squared Ongoing #5, $3.99
Tag Cursed #1, $3.99
Tag Vol. 1 TPB, $14.99
Two Guns #1, $3.99
What Were They Thinking Go West Young Man One Shot, $3.99

BROADSWORD COMICS
Tarot Witch of the Black Rose #42, $2.95 (spec. ed. $19.99)

DARK HORSE COMICS

Stan Sakai's ***Usagi Yojimbo*** marks its 100th issue with a special issue, scheduled to ship Jan. 31. The issue serves as an introduction to the world of the rabbit ronin and has eight extra story pages.

JAN. 4
Conan & The Midnight God #1, $2.99
Messengers Gn, $6.95

JAN. 10
Blade of the Immortal #121, $2.99
Hellgate London #3, $2.99
Red String Vol 1 Tp, $12.95
Samurai Heaven & Earth Vol. 2 #3, $2.99
Star Wars Legacy #8, $2.99

JAN. 17
Conan #36, $2.99
Frank Miller 300 Art of Making 300 Tp, $24.95
Ghost in the Shell 1.5 Human Error Processor #4, $2.99
Outer Orbit #2, $2.99
Rex Mundi Vol 2 The River Underground TP, $16.95
Sock Monkey The Inches Incident #3, $2.99
Star Wars: Clone Wars Adventure Vol 7 Tp, $6.95
Star Wars: Empire -- Wrong Side of the War Vol 7 Tp, $17.95
Tanpenshu Vol 1 Tp, $12.95
World Below Tp, $12.95

JAN. 24
Berserk Vol 15 Tp, $13.95
Criminal Macabre Two Red Eyes #2, $2.99
Dwight T Albatross The Goon Noir #3, $2.99
Kurosagi Corpse Delivery Service Vol 2 Tp, $10.95
Perhapanauts Second Chances #4, $2.99

JAN. 31
Archenemies Sinners & Saints Vol 1 Tp, $12.95
Blessed Thistle Gn, $9.95
Hellboy Animated Vol 1 Black Wedding Dress Tp, $6.95
Return of the Gremlins #3, $2.99
Star Wars Dark Times #4, $2.99
Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic #13, $2.99
***Usagi Yojimbo* #100, $3.50**

Broccoli International
Aquarian Age Juvenile Orion Realm of Light Art Book HC, $19.99
Es Vol. 1 GN, $9.99
Galaxy Angel Ii GN, $9.99

Cartoon Books
Bone Vol. 5 Rock Jaw Master of Eastern Border Color Ed SC, $9.99 (HC $18.99)

Checker Book Publishing Group
Alex Raymonds Flash Gordon Vol. 7 HC, $19.95
Chemical Warfare #3, $2.95
Trouble With Girls Vol. 2 TPB, $17.95

Cinebook
Biggles Recounts The Falklands War GN, $9.99
Blake & Mortimer The Yellow M GN, $14.45

Claypool Comics
Elvira #165, $2.50
Soulsearchers #82, $2.50

Del Rey
Air Gear Vol. 3 GN, $10.95
Free Collars Kingdom Vol. 1 GN, $10.95
Guru Guru Pon Chan Vol. 7 GN, $10.95
Kitchen Princess Vol. 1 GN, $10.95
Mushishi Vol. 1 GN, $12.95
Nodame Cantiabile Vol. 8 GN, $10.95
Pichi Pichi Pitch Vol. 4 GN, $10.95
Sugar Sugar Rune Vol. 5 GN, $10.95
Tsubasa Vol. 12 GN, $10.95

Devil's Due
D3 Patrick The Wolf Boy Vol. 3 Pkt TPB, $10.95
Demonwars The Demon Awakens #1, $4.99 (spec. ed. $8.99)
Dragonlance Chronicles Vol. 2 #4, $4.99 (spec. ed. $8.99)
G.I. Joe America's Elite #19, $2.99
G.I. Joe Declassified TPB, $14.99
G.I. Joe Dreadnoks Declassified #2, $4.99 (spec. ed. $8.99)
G.I. Joe vs. Transformers Vol. 4 #1, (two covers $2.99)
Hack Slash Vol. 2 Death By Sequel TPB, $14.99
How To Be A Comic Book Artist, $4.99
How To Self Publish Comics TPB, $14.95
Nightwolf The Price #4, $2.99

Digital Manga Distribution
Enchanter Vol. 3 GN, $12.95
Flower of Life Vol. 1 GN, $12.95
Our Kingdom Vol. 5 GN, $12.95
Rin Vol. 2 GN, $12.95
Seven GN, $12.95

Dr Master
Category Freaks Vol. 3 TPB, $9.95
Key Princess Story Eternal Alice Rondo Vol. 2 Novel, $9.95
Real Fake Princess Vol. 4 TPB, $9.95

Drawn & Quarterly
Oh Skinnay HC, $24.95
Walt & Skeezix Vol. 2 HC, $29.95

Dynamite Entertainment
Battlestar Galactica #7, (four covers $2.99)
Battlestar Galactica HC, (two covers $24.99)
Battlestar Galactica Zarek #3, (two covers $3.50)
Classic Battlestar Galactica #5, (two covers $3.50)
Highlander #4, (three covers $2.99)
Lone Ranger #5, $2.99
Red Sonja #19, (four covers $2.99)
Red Sonja 35th Anniversary Cover Showcase, $5.99
Xena #6, (four covers $3.50)

Fantagraphics
Calvario Hills #1, $7.95
Confessions Romances Secrets & Temptations SC, $9.95
Curiously Sinister Art of Jim Flora, $34.95
End, The #1, $7.95
Free Sexxx #3, $3.95
Harry The Rat With Women Novel, $12.95
Heartbreak Soup Palomar Vol. 1 TPB, $14.95
Hot Moms #9, $4.95
Living and the Dead GN, $9.95
Maggie The Mechanic Locas Vol. 1 TPB, $14.95
Reflections #2, $7.95
Wonderfool World GN, $24.95

Fenickx Productions
Archaic Vol. 1 Rule of the Deviant TPB, $17.95

An all-star roster of talent is assembles for ***Action Comics Annual #10***, which features a cover by Andy and Joe Kubert.

Jan. 4
52 #35, (two covers $2.50)
All New Atom #7, $2.99
All Star Superman #6, $2.99
Cipher Vol 6, $9.99
Crisis Aftermath The Battle For Bludhaven Tp, $12.99
Detective Comics #827, $2.99
Doom Patrol Vol 5 Magic Bus Tp, $19.99
Exterminators #13, $2.99
Green Lantern #16, $2.99
Green Lantern Archives Vol 6 Hc, $49.99
JLA Classified #31, $2.99
Jonah Hex #15, $2.99
JSA Vol 12 Ghost Stories Tp, $14.99
Justice League Unlimited #29, $2.25
Justice Society of America #2, $2.99
Looney Tunes #146, $2.25
Mad Magazine #474, $3.99
Manhunter #27, $2.99
Manhunter Vol 2 Trial By Fire Tp, $17.99
Midnighter #3, (two covers $2.99)
Mystery In Space #5, $3.99
Neil Gaiman and Charles Vess Stardust Hc, $39.99
Nightmare On Elm Street #4, $2.99
Nightwing #128, $2.99
Other Side #4, $2.99
Outsiders #44, $2.99
Outsiders The Good Fight Tp, $14.99
Scalped #1, $2.99
Superman Confidential #3, $2.99
Tranquility #2, (two covers $2.99)
Vs (Versus) Vol 4, $9.99

Jan. 10
100 Bullets #80, $2.99
52 #36, $2.50
Batman #662, $2.99
Batman Confidential #2, $2.99
Batman Strikes #29, $2.25
Batman Year One Deluxe Sc, $14.99
Cartoon Network Action Pack #9, $2.25
Densha Otoko Vol 2, $9.99
Fables #57 , $2.99
Fallen Angel Vol 2 Down To Earth Tp, $14.99
Friday The 13th #2, $2.99
From Eroica With Love Vol 8, $9.99
Gen 13 #4, (two covers $2.99)
Green Arrow #70, $2.99
Green Lantern Corps #8, $2.99
JSA Classified #21, $2.99
Mad Classics #13, $4.99
Majestic Vol 3 The Final Cut Tp, $14.99
Martian Manhunter #6, $2.99
OMAC #7, $2.99
Showcase Presents Justice League of America Vol 2 Tp, $16.99
Stormwatch Phd #3, (two covers $2.99)
Superman Batman Vs Aliens Predators #1, $5.99
Tales of the Unexpected #4, $3.99
Teen Titans #43, $2.99
Y: The Last Man #53, $2.99

Jan. 17
52 #37, $2.50
Aquaman Sword of Atlantis #48, $2.99
Batman Year One Hundred Tp, $19.99
Birds of Prey #102, $2.99
Catwoman #63, $2.99
Checkmate #10, $2.99
DMZ #15, $2.99
Flash The Fastest Man Alive #8, $2.99
Helmet of Fate Detective Chimp #1, $2.99
JLA Classified #32, $3.99
Kikaider Code 02 Vol 6, $9.99
Omega Men #4, $2.99
Recipe For Gertrude Vol 3, $9.99
Red Menace #3, $2.99
Sandman Mystery Theatre Sleep of Reason #2, $2.99
Scooby Doo #116, $2.25
Shadowpact #9, $2.99
Skye Runner #6, $2.99
Spirit #2, $2.99
Superman #660, $2.99
Superman Emperor Joker Tp, $14.99
Testament #14, $2.99
Testament Vol 2 West of Eden Tp, $12.99
Texas Chainsaw Massacre #3, $2.99

Jan. 24
52 #38, $2.50
Connor Hawke Dragon's Blood #3, $2.99
Crossing Midnight #3, $2.99
Deadman #6, $2.99
Hawkgirl #60, $2.99
Hellblazer #228, $2.99
Helmet of Fate Ibis The Invincible #1, $2.99
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Kamikaze Kaito Jeanne Vol 7, $9.99
Lucifer Vol 11 Evensong Tp, $14.99
Ninja Scroll #5, $2.99
Penguin Revolution Vol 2, $9.99
Red Sonja/Claw: Devil's Hands Tp, $12.99
Robin #158, $2.99
Showcase Presents Brave & Bold Batman Teamups Vol 1, $16.99
Supergirl and the Legion of Super Heroes #26, $2.99
Superman Batman #33, $2.99
Superman/Batman #32, $2.99
Teen Titans Go #39, $2.25
Trials of Shazam #5, $2.99
Uncle Sam and the Freedom Fighters #7, $2.99
Wetworks #5, $2.99
Wonder Woman #4, $2.99

Jan. 31
52 #39, $2.50
***Action Comics Annual* #10, (two covers $3.99)**
American Virgin #11, $2.99
Batman and the Mad Monk #6, $3.50
Batman Legends of the Dark Knight #214, $2.99
Batman Secrets Tp, $12.99
Blue Beetle #11, $2.99
Boys #7, $2.99
Cartoon Network Block Party #29, $2.25
Creeper #6, $2.99
Deathblow #3, (two covers $2.99)
Ex Machina #26, $2.99
Ion #10, $2.99
Ion Vol 1 The Torchbearer Tp, $14.99
Jack of Fables #7, $2.99
JLA Classified #33, $2.99
JSA Classified #22, $2.99
Krypto The Super Dog #5, $2.25
Loveless #15, $2.99
Seven Soldiers of Victory Vol. 4 TPB, $14.99
Superman Back In Action Tp, $19.99

COMICS IN YOUR FUTURE

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Donald Duck Adventures Vol. 22 TPB, $8.50
Donald Duck and Friends #348, $3.50
EC Archives Two Fisted Tales Vol. 1 HC, $49.95
Life and Times of SCrooge Mcduck Companion SC, $16.99
Mickey Mouse and Friends #297, $3.50
Uncle Scrooge #362, $7.50
Walt Disneys Comics & Stories #677, $7.50

GLASS SHORE PRESS
Wilderemere Vol. 1 TPB, $12.95

GO MEDIA ENTERTAINMENT
Cantarella Vol. 5 GN, $10.99
Crossroad Vol. 5 GN, $10.99
Her Majestys Dog Vol. 3 GN, $10.99
Tenshi Ja Nai (I'm No Angel) Vol. 5, $10.99

HAMMOCK ENTERTAINMENT
Achala Vol. 1 GN, $9.99
Estancia #4, $3.50

HEAVY METAL MAGAZINE
Ballad of the Sea GN, $14.95
Heavy Metal Magazine Spring 2007, $5.99

HERO STREET PRESS
Hero Street #2, $2.50

HEROIC PUBLISHING
Anthem #4, $2.99
Liberty Girl #3, $2.99

HIGH IMPACT COMICS
Lip Service Magazine #1, $5.95 (two spec. eds. $14.95)

HK COMICS
King of Kings Vol. 1 Pkt Ed, $1.95

ICARUS PUBLISHING
A G Super Erotic Anthology #51, $4.99
A G Super Erotic Anthology #52, $4.99
Anzu The Shards of Memory TPB, $19.95

ICE KUNION
Antique Gift Shop Vol. 4 GN, $10.95
Comic Vol. 2 GN, $10.95
Forest of Gray City Vol. 1 GN, $10.95
Hissing Vol. 3 GN, $10.95

IDW PUBLISHING
24 Nightfall #3, $3.99
30 Days of Night Spreading The Disease #2, $3.99
Angel Auld Lang Syne #3, $3.99
Ashley Woods D Airain Adventure #1, $4.99
Chicanos Vol. 2 TPB, $19.99
Clive Barkers Great & Secret Show #9, $3.99
CVO African Blood #2, $3.99
Desperadoes Buffalo Dreams #1, $3.99
Fallen Angel Idw #12, $3.99
Legend of Grimjack Volume 6 TPB, $24.99
Metal Gear Solid Sons of Liberty #10, $3.99
Scarface Scarred For Life #2, $3.99
Spike Asylum #5, $3.99
Star Trek Next Generation The Space Between #1, $3.99
Transformers Animated Movie Adaptation #4, $3.99
Transformers Escalation #3, $3.99
Transformers Spotlight Ultra Magnus, $3.99
War of the Undead #1, $3.99
Wormwood Gentleman Corpse #5, $3.99
Zombies Eclipse of the Undead #3, $3.99
Zombies Vol. 1 Tp Feast, $19.99

IMAGE
Darkness Level 2 #2, (three covers $2.99)
Freshmen Vol. 2 #3, (three covers $2.99)
Hunter Killer Vol. 1 TPB, $24.99
Innocents GN, $9.95
Witchblade #105, (two covers $2.99)

IMPERIUM COMICS
Pierce #3, $2.99

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Blood Alone Vol. 3, $9.95
Zero Vol. 3 GN, $10.95

JETPACK PRESS
Squarecat Comics Small Square & Sarcastic GN, $11.99

KENZER & COMPANY
Knights of the Dinner Table #123, $4.99

KING TRACTOR PRESS
Devil Water #2, $3.50
Family Bones #2, $3.50

KITTY PRESS
Pleasure Dome GN, $10.99

LAST GASP
Art of Hideshi Hino HC, $29.95

LUDOVICO TECHNIQUE
Red Line, The #2, $2.95

MAM TOR PUBLISHING
Event Horizon Vol. 2 Tp Half Price Sale, $9.50
Worry Doll GN, $17.95

MARKOSIA
Golly #2, $3.50
Lexian Chronicles Full Circle #12, $3.50 (spec. ed. $4.95)
Starship Troopers Damaged Justice #1 Director's Cut, $3.50 (signed $9.95)
Starship Troopers Damaged Justice #1 Ultra Edition, $20 (signed $29.95)
Starship Troopers Damaged Justice #3, (two covers $3.50, spec. ed. $4.50, signed $9.95)
Starship Troopers Dead Mans Hand #1 Directors Cut, $3.50
Twilight Men #0, $0.50

MARSHMALLOW FUN COMPANY
Johnny Blasters M-Force #2, $1.99

MASTERPIECE COMICS
Fireblast Adventures in the 30th Century #1, (two covers $2.99)

MIRAGE STUDIOS
Tales of Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles #31, $3.25
Tales of Tmnt Coll Books Vol. 2 Leonardo TPB, $12.00

MOONSTONE
Kolchak Tales Frankenstein Agenda #1, $3.50
Phantom #14, $3.50

MU PRESS
Dr Phlogistons Potpourri of Lascivious Whimsy GN, $9.99

NATIONAL PRESS COMICS
Special Education #3, $2.99

NBM
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Castaways, The GN, $17.95

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Boy Princess Vol. 5 GN, $9.99
Click Vol. 1 GN, $9.99
June Vol. 2 GN, $9.99
Let Dai Vol. 5 GN, $9.99
Narration of Love At 17 Vol. 3 GN, $9.99

NICKELODEON
Avatar Magazine The Last Airbender, $3.99

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Kanas Island #1, $3.50

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Damned #4, $3.50
Leading Man Vol. 1 TPB, $14.95
Wasteland #6, $2.99

OSPREY GRAPHICS
Graphic History Fight To The Death, $9.95
Graphic History Ironclads At War, $9.95

OUROBOR BOOKS
Never Made To Last Stories of Suburban Folklore GN, $10.00

PAPERCUTZ
Hardy Boys Vol. 8 Board To Death GN, $7.95 (HC $12.95)

PENNY FARTHING PRESS
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Cold Heat #2, $5.00
Drips GN, $8.00
Incancto #1, $5.00
Paper Rad Bj & Da Dogs GN, $29.95
Utility Notebook GN, $6.95

PRAXIS COMICS
Scarletts Curse #0-1 Combo, $3.95

PRIMA PUBLISHING
Perfect Dark Janus Tears #5, $3.50

PURE IMAGINATION PUBLISHING
Miss Fury TPB, $25.00

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Genus Male #6, $5.99
Milk #57, $3.50
Nefratitties #1, $5.99
Xxx-Mas #1, $5.99

REBELLION
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2000 Ad #1519, $4.10
2000 Ad #1520, $4.10
2000 Ad #1521, $4.10
2000 Ad #1522, $4.10
Judge Dredd Megazine #254, $7.50
Strontium Dog Search Destroy Agency Files 01 GN, $28.99

SHANDA FANTASY ARTS
Shandas Bedtime Tails #2, $4.99

SILENT DEVIL PRODUCTIONS
Amerikan Freak One-Shot, $2.99
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Furious Fist of Drunken Monkey Origin Species #3, $2.95
Mr Big GN, $9.99

SIRIUS ENTERTAINMENT
Poison Elves Lost Tales #12, $2.95

SLAVE LABOR GRAPHICS
Next Exit #11, $2.95
Nightmares and Fairy Tales #18, $2.95

SUNDAY PRESS BOOKS
Little Nemo In Slumberland So Many Splendid Sundays, $120.00

TITAN PUBLISHING
James Bond Phoenix Project TPB, $19.95
Wallace & Gromit Magazine #18, $5.99

TOKYOPOP
Ai Yori Aoshi Vol. 15 GN, $9.99
Angel Cup Vol. 3 GN, $9.99
Archlord Vol. 1 GN, $9.99
Beyond The Beyond Vol. 3 GN, $9.99
Blame Vol. 7 GN, $9.99
Blood Sucker Legend of Zipangu Vol. 3 GN, $9.99
Boys Be Vol. 12 GN, $9.99
Bratz Vol. 1 Jr Cinemanga GN, $3.99
Broken Angels Vol. 4 GN, $9.99
Cinderella III Cinemanga GN, $5.99
Dot Hack Sign Another Birth Vol. 3 Novel, $7.99
Dragon Knights Vol. 24 GN, $9.99
Faeries Landing Vol. 15 GN, $9.99

Adventures of Spawn **#1 Director's Cut**, scheduled to ship Jan. 4, expands on the web-comic adventures of Todd McFarlane's hell-born vigilante.

JAN. 4
68, $3.99
***Adventures of Spawn* #1 Director's Cut, $5.99**
Hip Flask Concrete Jungle HC, $29.99
Silencers TPB, $14.99
Weird World of Jack Staff King Size Special #1, $5.99

JAN. 10
Battle Pope Vol. 3 TPB: Pillow Talk, $12.99
Iron Ghost Geist Reich TPB, $15.99
Loaded Bible 2 Blood of Christ, $4.99
Meltdown #2, $5.99
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The creative workshop

The right environment can energize — or re-energize — your comics aspirations

by **JOHN JACKSON MILLER**

As comics collectors, we're especially qualified to avoid one of the pitfalls of writers everywhere — drowning in a sea of disorganization!

For as much as we've talked about comics here, articles about *comics collecting* — their actual storage and retrieval — tend to be popular far out of proportion with their frequency. ***CBG*** has increasingly tried to address that: In a world where our readers have more and more comic books every year, finding a place to put them is a "growing" problem.

But what if you're one of those comics readers who wants to write or draw your own? (And I suspect that's a majority.) Sure, we've run articles and hosted convention panels about comics creation — and our company publishes a number of books and magazines on the creative life, including *Writer's Digest* and the indispensable *Writer's Market*. But something that's almost never touched on is the kind of *environment* that's conducive to creation — and how to build it.

It's funny. I've met collectors who spend dozens of hours a year organizing their comics to get more out of their collections — and yet, when it comes to their *own* creative output, chaos reigns. Works in progress are strewn all over here, in those boxes over there, in that dead hard drive, and back in the ex-wife's apartment somewhere. I guess the thinking goes that the creative process is an organic one, so a little undergrowth is to be expected. You can't organize ideas.

Except — well, you can. Or at least, you're supposed to, to sell those ideas. And, since the roadblock reported by aspiring creators who give up is invariably a lack of time, whipping a little of our compulsive organizational habits on our own work can help win some of that time back. Just as keeping our comics collections organized helps us get the most enjoyment out of it, organizing our creative lives can help us get the most out of them, too.

Or you can learn the hard way. I did — at a young age...

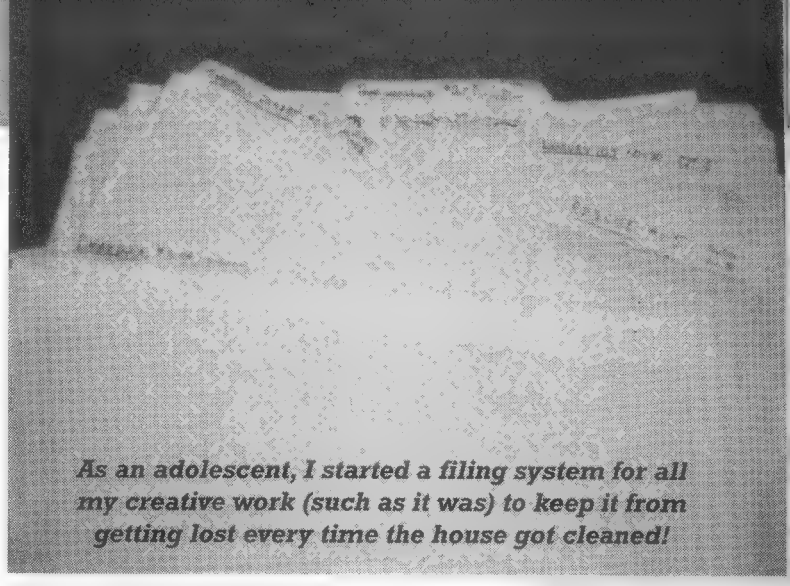
Crisis of organization. I started writing and drawing my own comics at almost the same time I began reading them — at age 6. I'd take 8.5 x 11-inch sheets of paper, cut them in half, and draw in panel form the adventures of my various characters. (The first, *Space Tracer*, was about the last boy on Earth — no, not Kamandi — who flew about the solar system in a wacky-looking spaceship he'd built.) By age 10, I had a pretty fair-sized library of characters and issues stacked up, right alongside my growing collection of real comic books.

Then my family moved to another house — and *WHACK!* — everything was gone.

Well, not the really *important* stuff. We remembered to bring along the real comic books. I'm sure I insisted on that! But all those comics, I suspect, were bumped into a trash can with so much schoolwork. It's hard to say: With so many boxes around, who knows? That move also lost my Wacky Packages and innumerable games and toys that I never would have given to the garage sale. (I think there's probably a study to be done on how often the people with really great collections of stuff moved!)

Anyway, following this Crisis on Miller Earth, I started my young creative life anew, coming up with a brand new slate of characters for both my comics and my prose stories. And, while my real comic books were well organized, my own stuff tended to be less so — a situation that continued until I was 12, when the next disaster happened. During a spring cleaning, a 20-page typewritten work-in-progress vanished into thin air — which brought back enough bad memories that I decided to prevent that from ever happening again.

So, heisting a bunch of manila folders



As an adolescent, I started a filing system for all my creative work (such as it was) to keep it from getting lost every time the house got cleaned!

from Dad's office, I set about locating every single amateur comic-book and prose story I had done since the previous move. Everything went into its own folder, labeled with the date of its creation. Just the stuff between ages 10 and 12 amounted to a full box of folders — I was spending about as much time drawing comics as I was reading them.

And I've kept it up for a quarter of a century. Those folders — and their contents — still exist, only now they're nestled in three large file-cabinets full of more recent work. The *Dungeons & Dragons* modules I wrote in junior high. The comic strips, fanzines, and small-press mini-comics from my high-school years. Umpteen short stories and false starts at novels from college.

And now, the same system is helping to keep me from drowning in paper — and from losing too much time looking for notes. There's also a single folder for each comic book I've written. Each contains...

- a printed version of the pitch;
- a printed version of the most recently submitted draft;
- any notes from previous drafts, from myself or the editors;
- printouts of any visual references directly relating to that issue, including any sketches from the artist;
- and, when the issue is out, a physical copy of the comic book. It doesn't matter if it gets dog-eared; it's supposed to!

You might ask why I don't save these things electronically. Well, I do — and I'll get more into that in a bit. But even in this supposedly "paperless society," I find I have an easier time referring to a printed draft while I have the next draft up on the screen. It's also easier to dig through notes rather than manage a bunch of open windows on the screen. I pretty much find that anything that takes the draft I'm working on off the main screen increases the chances that I'll get distracted from it. Just like when you go into your comics collection looking for something, you search for one thing and you wind up reading something else.

Separate files include the stuff you'd normally keep filed away, anyway: contracts for each issue, purchase orders, notes from the publishers, *etc.*

And, as with my comics collection, there are ad hoc "special collections" of files that come out at any given time. I have "local shelving" for the comics I bring out of the main collection to read or refer to; likewise, I keep several small cases of "ready reference" folders right by the writing desk. These are the books I'm either working on or need to refer back to frequently.

Another reason to keep the old material filed away is that you never know when you'll need to borrow from yourself. The group of pitches that I sent Dark Horse for *Star Wars: Empire* included an unsent one from a decade before. (It wasn't the one that eventually sold but it beefed up the submission.) And, particularly, keeping past research materials around is a big help. A wire-service photo from Moscow I'd put in an "idea file" in 1993 directly inspired the opening scene in *Crimson Dynamo* in 2003. I didn't know what I was saving it for back then, other than there was an idea there somewhere. It took 10 years to figure out what it was.

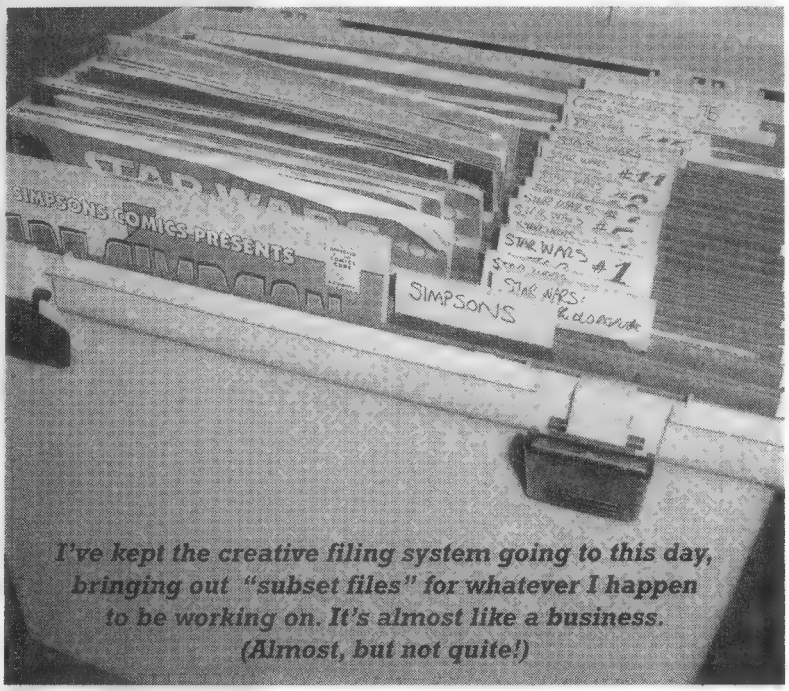
Electronic files. With the virtual folders our personal computers provide, there's not much excuse for disorganization on the hard drive. The bigger issues have to do with maintenance.

I found out the hard way this year, when I was forced into an unintentional additional draft for *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* #9. A power problem with a misbehaving hard drive turned both the script *and* its back-up into a file full of "@" signs. That certainly would have set fans talking, but they probably wouldn't have been saying how avant-garde it was. There followed many panicked hours of trying to recover the file, until I finally hit the inevitable moment of realization that I'd spent more time trying to rescue it than rewriting would have taken. Since then, I've quadrupled my regimen of back-ups, on multiple drives. I'm keeping a flash drive on the cat's collar now.

But apart from the odd and hopefully infrequent disaster, one of the greatest dangers to your creative archives comes in the electronic equivalent to moving to another house: changing computers. While it's not as much of a problem as it once was, "format drift" is an issue that's faced creators for years. All my work since 1990 is accessible; they're in *Word* files and I was even able to bring the folder architecture along across something like six different Macs over the years. But everything I wrote from 1983 to 1990 is trapped in *Apple Writer* files on 5.25-inch floppies — and, as I never could get my Apple IIe or IIc to accept the 3.5-inch drive I found, they're never coming off of there. I

Even in this "paperless society," it's often easier to refer to a printed draft than edit on the screen.

Another thing to keep track of!



I've kept the creative filing system going to this day, bringing out "subset files" for whatever I happen to be working on. It's almost like a business. (Almost, but not quite!)

finally just dug out the old ImageWriter I had and printed them out. You wouldn't have thought something that old would be necessary, but I literally rewrote a college short story into a pitch the other day.

"Format drift" is a big enough deal to worry the National Archives, so keeping your work always moving along to the latest platform is something that should concern us all. I made a plot point in a *Crimson Dynamo* issue out of important technical documents from the early 1980s, trapped on the cassette-tape drive of a Vic-20, where no one could get them!

Keeping control of your computer and online files also makes more time for the important business — actually creating something!

On the Web-browser side, I keep several folders full of bookmarks of the most frequent sites for reference. It's good to find a few good sites and stick with them, to avoid a bunch of addresses junking up the files. I could have gone crazy with all the technical sites I turned up in researching the military for my run on *Iron Man*; fortunately, I found in ***globalsecurity.org*** a single clearing house for information on the level that I needed it.

Another thing to look at — and this is a bit like the format-drift side of things — is that some of the pages you want to refer to might not be around forever. Particularly, news articles tend to get rotated offline fairly regularly. These you'll want to print out or save as Web pages on your own hard drive. It is true that you can find cached versions of offline sites on places like ***archive.org***, but you have to have the URL first — and there's no guarantee that the page will be backed up there.

Finally, there's your e-mail, which is likely to be the hardest part of your creative life to organize, once you're in regular contact with publishers and other writers and artists. Single issues can generate so much correspondence, that it's difficult to say whether it's best to subdivide that material by date, by publisher, or by project. I've wrestled with it a lot myself. Once you get past 1,000 messages in a folder, it's time to start subdividing.

But there are two strong recommendations: If you use a free mail service, make sure you still store the e-mail locally through your own mail client so you don't have to be online to see it. And always, always, always, save your "sent" mail. You never know when what's in there might be important one day.

Go forth and shuffle paper. It's easy to dismiss the value of organization as unimportant, or as something that we assume all creators would be doing anyway. All I can say is that I've visited the studios and home offices of creators who do it for a living — and those of people who have never quite gotten off the ground — and the difference is real.

Does getting organized increase your chances of getting published? Probably no more than having your materials organized increases your chances of any other kind of job. Ultimately, if you don't have the requisite skills, it doesn't matter how you present your case. Maintaining well-organized documentation of your past fantasy-football teams will not get you a job coaching in the NFL. (OK, maybe with the Lions.)

But organization might have something to do with how *often* you get published. Again, as with organizing your comics collection, it's all about optimizing the precious time you have for creation. You can't enjoy your comics unless you can find them. And, if writing or drawing comics is your hobby, being able to find what you need, when you need it, gives you more time to devote to the actual practice. In general, more time means more pitches — and more pitches means more projects. Period.

As comics fans, we're already pack rats. You might say, then, we've got a Darwinian advantage over the teeming millions of other would-be writers and artists in the world. When we have an idea, we have at least a fighting chance of being able to find it again when we really need it!

JOHN JACKSON MILLER gets organized so he can write comic books including *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic* and books including the *2007 CBG Checklist & Price Guide*. Rap with him at *www.farawaypress.com, www.cbgxtra.com,* or *ohso@krause.com*!

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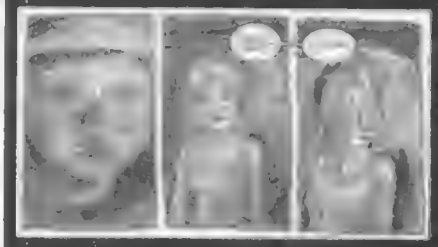

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The toybox of testosterone

Playing Army

by **BEAU SMITH**

The Children of the Cornbread — The Smith Brothers (left to right): Gig, Beau, and Mitch.

Growing up as a kid in the 1960s, my life was filled with some pretty good memories. I was a very lucky kid who led a *Leave It to Beaver/My Three Sons* kinda life. Nobody died in my family; there wasn't any trauma, no domestic trouble, no drugs, gangs, or perverts. I was very lucky and have never taken that for granted.

I had two younger brothers and a much younger sister. We did what we thought were normal things. Non-school time and summers were mostly spent outdoors playing, trading comic books, playing Tarzan in the woods, and swinging on a grapevine over the creek. We played out all the stuff we read in comic books and watched on TV.

One thing my brothers and all our friends in the neighborhood did — and did a lot of — was playing Army. Back then, everybody was still riding high off the victories of World War II and the near-perfect '50s. This was before most folks got nutty and way too politically correct. I can only guess that, in the last 25 years, folks must be working less and less with way too much time on their hands. That's gotta be the reason they started putting way too much under the microscope and wanting to PC everything up.

Back in the day, parents never gave it a second thought to buy their kid toy guns and watch them pretend to be anybody from Roy Rogers to a member of TV's *Rat Patrol.* Our parents gave us a really good upbringing between right and wrong as well as fantasy and reality. (The only thing I remember being confused about was how did Daredevil's costume go from yellow to all red without an explanation.)

The best part was the toy guns that were based on real ones *looked* like real ones. They didn't have that crummy bright orange cap on the barrel and they weren't painted some

goofy neon color. If you look really hard, you'll find that the trouble with kids and violence didn't start until people started sugar-coating stuff.

Getting back on topic (as if I ever have one): In my neighborhood, we took playing Army serious. "Playing Army" was a broad stroke. It meant that we could be playing us against the Nazis or commies, playing cowboys against Indians, fighting off space invaders, or being spies. Just depended on what comic book we had read or TV show we'd watched.

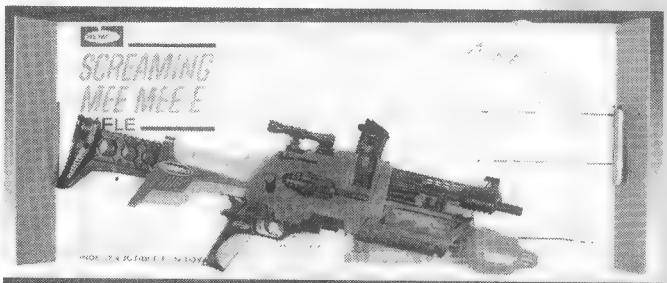
I've gotta say that my brothers and I were possibly the most well-armed kids on the planet. At least, we were in my neighborhood. Among the three of us, we had every toy gun you could imagine. Christmases and birthdays were times when the stockpile of weapons would grow.

My weapon of choice was from Mattel. It was always noted for making fine weaponry for kids during the '60s. When I was in the third grade, I got the Guerrilla Gun Set for my birthday. It came with a camouflaged Thompson machine gun with cloth strap and a side bolt action that did double duty. It would fire caps or, if you didn't have caps that day, it made a great *rat-a-tat* sound. The set also came with a jungle knife and a poncho. The knife was used to torment anybody we didn't shoot. The poncho was great for playing in the rain as well as a device of torment by placing it over the head of a captive and trying to smother him. (That always caused some kid to cry, though.) I always imagined myself as Sgt. Saunders from the TV show *Combat* or Sgt. Fury from the Marvel Comics. They always carried a Thompson.

One year for Christmas, my brother and I received all the Topper Toys Johnny Seven Helmets. They were like something out of the Gold Key comic book *M.A.R.S. Patrol — Total War.* They had a very cool tinted visor, a radio antenna on the side, and they were shaped like something from a science-fiction movie. They were actually constructed really well and lasted us for years. They rivaled our Remco Monkey Division Helmets.

When I *really* wanted to strike fear into my enemies, I would put on my Horrible Hamilton Invaders helmet with the huge insect-like goggles. I remember the other kids looking on in horror, as I came out of the house wearing that Fedora of Fear.

It was around that same time (1964) that I really amped up the firepower, when I got the Johnny Seven O.M.A. (One Man Army) rifle. It was seven guns of destruction in one. It shot grenades, armor piercing shells, and anti-tank rockets, was a repeating rifle and an automatic pistol, and had a retractable bipod; it just plain scared the heck out of everybody. I was every kid's nightmare with that gun and helmet. The only kid on the block who gave me trouble was Randy Watts. He had the monster Defender Dan tripod machine gun by Deluxe Reading. It was belt-fed with 24 nasty plastic bullets. Once he set that baby up, you really had to be mobile to avoid it zinging you in the chest. (My younger brother, Mitch, would fight back as best he could with his huge Johnny Reb Cannon that shot big plastic cannon balls.)



Once, we took a kid prisoner and held him in front of the cannon and shot him in the chest point-blank. It didn't really hurt him as much as it scared him *thinking* it would hurt. Playing mind games on the enemy was always in our plans.

I was every kid's nightmare with that gun and helmet.

I think the biggest weapons coup I ever had was when Mattel came through and put out the ultimate toy gun: The Zero M Sonic Blaster! That gun was Hell on Earth for anybody on the receiving end of its bad wind.

It was tubular torture. It was Hurricane

I remember that I used to hum the theme to TV's *Combat*, as we played Army in the fields and area around my neighborhood.

Katrina in cannon form. It was my dream come true. It looked like a bazooka on steroids and blasted out over 157 decibels of eardrum-busting pain. In fact, about a year after it came out, Mattel stopped making the weapon and I think even tried to recall them because of the damage they were doing when other kids like me were pressing it against other kid's ears and blasting them. This seemed to burst a lot of eardrums.

I must say they would've had to pry my cold, dead fingers off mine to get it away from me. Needless to say, after about a year of heavy use, my Zero M Sonic Blaster finally died on me, and the entire neighborhood sighed in relief. But for that year or so, I was truly to be feared!

There were other weapons of wonderment that we had during those wonderful sunny days of youth. The arsenal contained such ordnance as:

The Screaming Mee-Mee E Pistol and Rifle from Remco. It not only shot off grenades, but they made a hellish screaming noise, as they brought pain and destruction.

The Monkey Division Bazooka. This tubular gun wasn't much on power but it sounded just like a mortar in those World War II movies.

The Rebel Scattergun. From the TV show *The Rebel* starring Nick Adams. This was a sawed-off double-barreled shotgun that looked very imposing and was easily hidden.

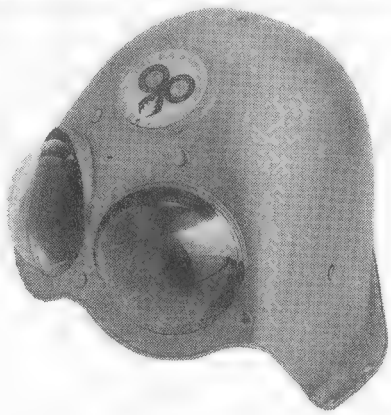
The Zero M Nightfighter Machine Gun by Mattel. This looked a lot like the Guerilla machine gun, only it was solid black and had a scope.

Mighty Mo Howitzer by Deluxe Reading. A massive cannon that shot out a huge shell. This was a real intimidator.

The one toy gun that I was too young to have had a chance at was The Fury F-500 machine gun that came out from Nichols in the 1950s. It was a big black and chrome battery-operated Thompson machine gun that had a cap-firing 50-round drum. The really cool part was that it had outer space graphics engraved on the side — why, I don't know, but as a kid you just didn't care.

I remember that I used to hum the theme to TV's *Combat*, as we played Army in the fields and area around my neighborhood. When we pretended to be on a PT boat, we'd even act as if we were on the *PT 73* of *McHale's Navy* — the good TV show, not the bad Tom Arnold movie.

Yes, we were rough. We did things that would horrify parents today, but back then we were just kids being kids. None of us grew up to be serial killers or mad bombers. Maybe we were lucky, but I think it was because we had good parents who taught us right from wrong, fantasy from reality, and how to respect other folks.



Please remember that these were different times. You can't compare them with today and the world we live in. I'm not looking to get into a Red State, Blue State debate or try to make you choose between hugging a tree and joining the NRA. It's just the way it was when I was a kid.

Like every decade, it's a time you can't get back. You may not have the toys but you'll always have the memories. We all have our own that we can look fondly back on, and I hope that most of yours are the kind that make you smile.

I appreciate you taking the time to read this month's *Dottin' the Eyes*. Maybe we'll crawl back into the toy box of the past another time.

Beau Smith invites questions, answers, thoughts or wonderful items of worth to The Flying Fist Ranch, P.O. Box 706, Ceredo, WV 25507. E-mail Beau at *beau@flyingfistranch.com* or visit his website: ***www.flyingfistranch.com***

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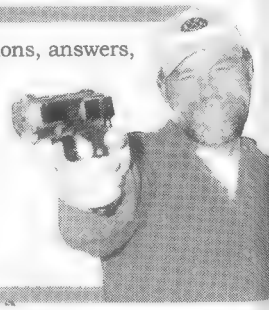

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Beyond the holiday season ...

Gifts KEEP ON GIVING

by **TONY ISABELLA**

Christmas renews our youth by stirring our wonder. The capacity for wonder has been called our most pregnant human faculty, for in it are born our art, our science, our religion.

— Ralph W. Stockman

Last go-round, I touched ever-so-briefly on the joys of giving and receiving gifts "whose recipients didn't even know the gifts existed or that they wanted them." Hold that thought.

Around the time I was writing last month's column, I received and, apparently, gave gifts whose recipients didn't even know they were coming.

On previous occasions, I've also proclaimed that I don't write this column for the creators or the publishers. I write it for the comics buyers, which, given the title of this magazine, is a real no-brainer. It's a welcome bonus, if my reviews help creators or publishers, but that's never been Job One. Hold those thoughts, as well.

Around the time I was writing last month's column, I received and, apparently, gave gifts whose recipients didn't even know they were coming. My share of the booty came in the form of this e-mail from my friend Ron Fortier:

"Hope this finds you well and happy. Had to share a little story with you that you'll appreciate.

"I attended a small one-day comic show up in Portland, Maine, last week. Very small turnout, but I had the opportunity to catch up with some old friends and I did manage to sell a few of my new pulp titles.

"Well, among the books I'd brought was *Brother Grim* and towards the end of the day this woman came over to my table and picked up a copy of it. When I started to politely comment on the book and character, she looked at me and smiled, 'Oh, I know. I read Tony Isabella's review of it in ***CBG*** and have been looking for it ever since.'

"Nice story for you. Ha. Sad one for me. Still can't crack Diamond. Oh, well, she did find me and got an autographed copy. From little steps come big victories."

I reviewed *Brother Grim* a year ago. As unexpected gifts go, the tenacity of that *Tips* reader in looking for the book, based on my review, is pretty darn spiffy. I hope she enjoys Ron's stories as much as I did and I'm delighted to have helped Ron sell a copy of his book.

I'm not so delighted that the book wasn't readily available at her friendly neighborhood comics shop or bookstore. I don't blame the shop or the bookstore or even Diamond — well, maybe just a little in Diamond's case — because I recognize the limitations of space and resources in the operations of stores and distributors.

But that means reviewers have an obligation to go a little further than just recommending (or not) the items they review. That's why ***CBG*** tries to include online directions to the things its columnists and reviewers write about.

The esteemed Fortier is currently writing and producing pulp novels and anthologies for Wild Cat Books. You can find listings for the publisher's books and order them at *www.lulu.com/wildcatbooks*.

You can learn about Fortier's past, present, and future work by visiting his personal website at *www.airship27.com*.

Finally, you can read his pulp fiction reviews — everybody's trying to get into the act — by going to *www.pulpfictionreviews.blogspot.com*.

But you can visit all those sites *after* you read this month's reviews ...

They aren't comics, *per se*, but Komikwerks' new Actionopolis line of illustrated novels for young adults utilizes the talents of some of comicdom's best writers and artists. The company sent me galley editions of its first books, every one of them featuring intriguing premises, solid storytelling, and interesting heroes and villains. Each book contains a dozen or so full-page drawings and many additional spot illustrations. A few of

the books get off to slow starts, but they finish strong. Let's look at the individual titles.

If you're not done with your holiday shopping yet, any one of the Actionopolis novels would make a fine gift for the young adult readers on your list. You should be able to find them at better comics shops and chain bookstores everywhere but, if you can't, you can order them directly from Actionopolis at *www.actionoplis.com.*

There will be more Actionopolis titles coming our way in 2007. The writers and artists will include Colleen Doran, Keith Giffen, Dwayne McDuffie, Louise Simonson, and Bernie Wrightson. How's that for not resting on one's laurels?

What I Did on My Hypergalactic Interstellar Summer Vacation

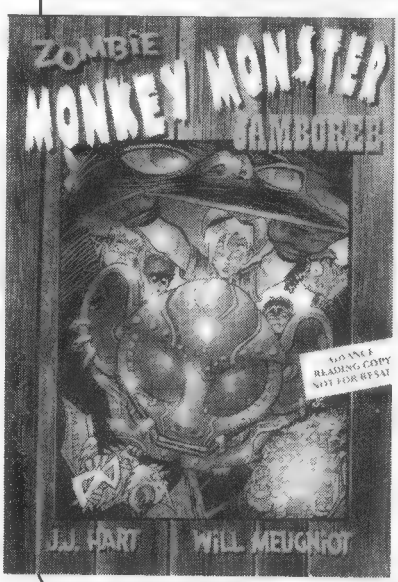
By Adam Beechen and Dan Hipp

What I Did on My Hypergalactic Interstellar Summer Vacation (hardcover, $12.95; softcover, $9.95) is written by Adam Beechen (*Robin, Justice League Unlimited*) with art by Dan Hipp (*Amazing Joy Buzzards).* A clever-but-unmotivated middle-school student switches places with a distant world's bored young prince, an alien ruler-to-be who has rarely ventured from his father's castle. Teddy Harper is thrilled to be freed from the tedium of summer school, but his adventure turns deadly serious when a coup is launched against the planet's royal family. Beechen includes plenty of humor with the adventure, and, although this book is complete unto itself, I'd love to see a sequel. Maybe along the lines of *What We Did during Our Hypergalactic Student Exchange Program.* In any case, Beechen and Hipp earn four out of five Tonys for this book.

Zombie Monkey Monster Jamboree

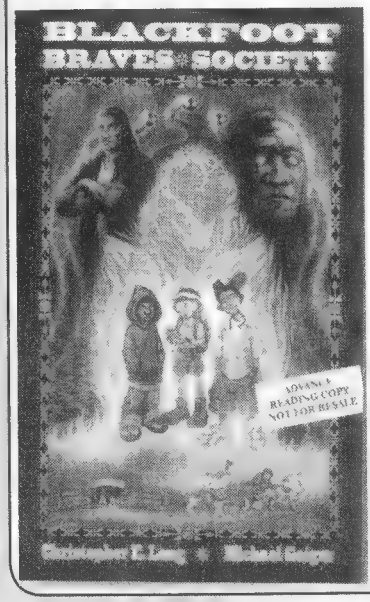
By J.J. Hart and Will Meugniot

I think ***Zombie Monkey Monster Jamboree*** is the funniest of the books, because how can a book in which farting plays a pivotal role *not* be the funniest? Written by J.J. Hart (aka Jeff Mariotte) with art by Will Meugniot (*DNAgents*), this is "the true chronicle of the Basilisk Patrol's greatest campout ever!" With new patrol leader Skitter in command, this group of Wild West Scouts are brushing up on their outdoor skills. Besides the usual challenges to be found in the woods, the boys have to deal with missing adult supervisors — they got lost with all the food — and their accidental release of a pack of zombie monkey monsters. That there are laughs aplenty does not detract from the scariness also to be found in the novel. It earns four Tonys.



"I'm so sorry, Sk Skeeter. I'm gonna [illegible]

Blackfoot Braves Society Book One: Spirit Totems



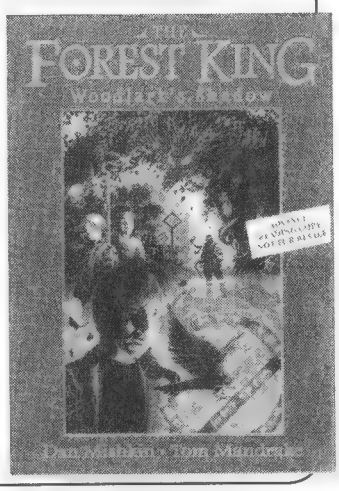
By Christopher E. Long

I had a tough time picking a favorite from among these seven books, but ***Blackfoot Braves Society Book One: Spirit Totems*** was a contender. Christopher E. Long gives us three friends who, in time of great peril, learn to unlock the powers of their animal spirits. His tale is respectful of Native Americans and their culture, not surprising given that Long used to write for a public relations firm that represented several tribes. Illustrator Michael Geiger does a great job bringing the young heroes to visual life in a book that's deliciously spooky and wonderfully uplifting. It earns four out of five Tonys. I'm sensing a pattern here.

The Forest King: Woodlark's Shadow

By Dan Mishkin and Tom Mandrake

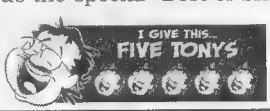
Few folks do spooky better than Dan Mishkin and Tom Mandrake, co-creators of the sadly missed *Creeps* comic, and they bring their "A" game — as in "Aiyeeeeeeeeeee!" — to ***The Forest King: Woodlark's Shadow***. A legendary creature of evil stirs in the forest outside a small New England town. Only one young man, the unwitting heir to his family's forgotten destiny, has even the most remote chance of standing against this creature ... but only if he can overcome the fear that chills his soul. With extra kudos to Mishkin for ramping up the dread just when the reader thinks the menace is ending, I'm also giving this book four Tonys.

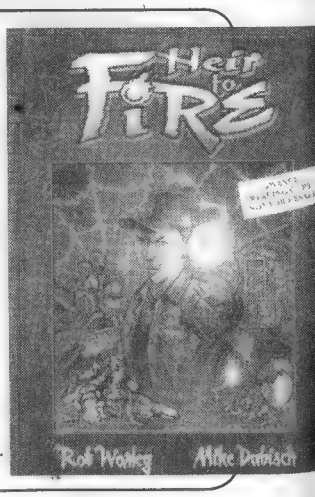


Heir to Fire

By Rob Worley and Mike Dubisch

That brings us to my pick for the best of Actionopolis books: ***Heir to Fire*** by Rob Worley with art by Mike Dubisch. This feels and reads like a really good Marvel comic of the 1970s or so. Ryan Morales has a secret power that he is only beginning to understand. He's learning he's not who he always thought he was. His parents — and the populace of the small Arizona town of Gila Flats — have been taken over by mind-controlling spiders. His enemies come from some otherworldly realm, and, besides his girlfriend, his allies are an army of salamanders. It's big fun that would work well on the big screen. It earns the full five out of five Tonys plus the special "Best of Show" ribbon.





Spirit of the Samurai by Gene Reed and Rick Hoberg
The Anubis Tapestry Book One by Bruce Zick

The next two books share a greater sense of tragedy than the other Actionopolis launch titles. ***Spirit of the Samurai: Of Swords and Rings***, written by Gene Reed and illustrated by Rick Hoberg, has a 13-year-old girl discovering the ancient secrets of her family, as her brother is possessed by an evil ancestor. She must become the last guardian against the returning darkness and the sworn enemy of her transformed brother. The thought that her brother may be lost to her forever is heartrending, as is the sudden reappearance of the stranger who claims to be her father. *Spirit* is a notch above the other excellent Actionopolis offerings, and this initial book in the series will leave you eager for the next. That earns Reed and Hoberg the full five Tonys.

The hero of Bruce Zick's ***The Anubis Tapestry Book One: Between Twilights*** also suffers a familial loss, as resurrected evil mummy Sehti possesses the body of Dr. George Henry and condemns the man's spirit to the Egyptian underworld. Teaming with the resurrected good mummy Osirius, Chance must himself become a mummy to save his dad, though the process may destroy Osirius and rob Chance of his humanity. As with *Spirit of the Samurai*, the stakes are extremely high for mankind and extremely personal for the book's young hero. Zick picks up four Tonys.

The World of Quest
By Jason Kruse

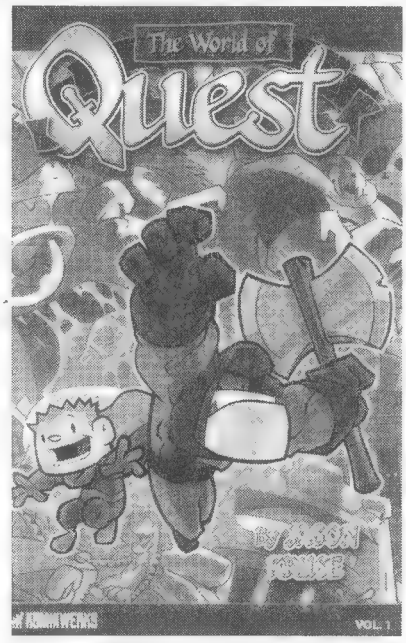
Komikwerks also sent me ***The World of Quest*** ($14.95), the first volume of a graphic-album series by Jason Kruse. The title star, Quest, is a former hero with a bad attitude and no desire to again take up that role. He's forced by circumstance into searching for a magic dagger in the company of Prince Nestor, a pre-teen hellion who resembles Bill Watterson's Calvin.

Modern swords-and-sorcery fiction is a tough sell to me. I generally think of it as "that Dungeons & Dragons stuff," still shuddering at the thought of awful books that seemed no more than boring novelizations of the authors' D&D campaigns. That said, you should also know that a little slapstick violence and some decent gross jokes will often draw me into a swords-and-sorcery comic book.

Anyway, *Quest* has its moments. There are enough funny jokes told in Kruse's pleasingly amusing art style that I read the whole book. But what this first volume lacked was enough meat to fill its 127 pages in a satisfying manner. Its large panels and overly long gags felt like padding.

I'm not terribly enthusiastic about *The World of Quest* but I recognize its good intentions and sincere efforts. It may not be my thing, but I suspect many readers will like it far more than I did. Let's grade it on the curve and award it a respectable three out of five Tonys.

Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night. Oh, heck, why don't we make that a good *year*? I hear 2007 is available.



It may not be my thing, but I suspect many readers will like it far more than I did.

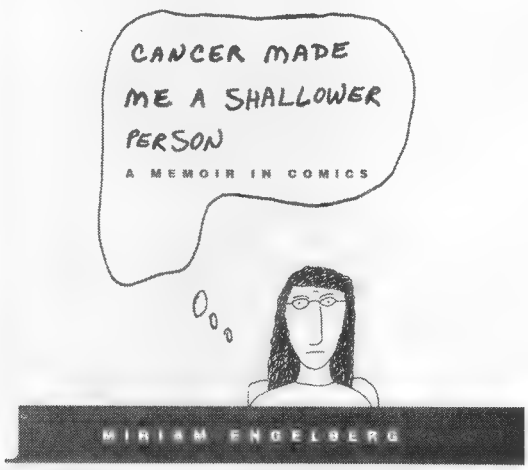
Cancer Made Me a Shallower Person by Miriam Engelberg
Cancer Vixen by Marisa Acocella Marchetto

This year saw the publication of two courageous and hilarious graphic novels about a subject not usually associated with laughs.

Yet cartoonists Miriam Engelberg and Marisa Acocella Marchetto were able to shape their fears and pain into works of amazing artistry and undeniable heart.

Engleberg's ***Cancer Made Me a Shallower Person*** (Harper, $14.95) is a chronological collection of vignettes, some of them as short as a page. After she was diagnosed with breast cancer, cartooning became her means of coping with her disease and the treatments she would undergo in battling it.

The scariness of her situation didn't prevent Engleberg from going for the laughs, sometimes outrageously. It takes a seriously determined cartoonist to ask the burning question of whether it's OK to play the cancer card with telemarketers. To be sure, there are tears in this book, but they are cushioned by the cartoonist's sense of hope and sense of humor.

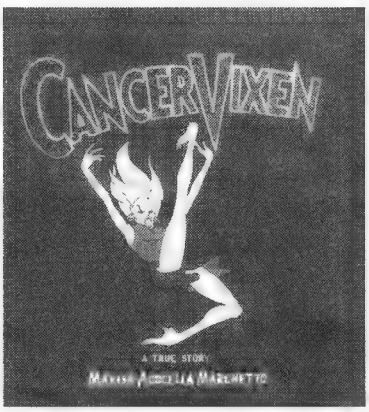


Sadly, I was halfway through *Cancer Made Me a Shallower Person* when word reached me that Engleberg had died in her hometown of San Francisco, surrounded by loving family and friends. The first-time graphic novelist was only 48 years old. It took me a day to return to Engleberg's book, and I wondered if I could get through it. As it turned out, I couldn't put it down until I finished it. Her death had not diminished the quality of her book in the least. It remained funny, human, and thoughtful to its characteristically optimistic final pages.

There are works that I firmly believe must be part of the collection of every serious student of comic art. This is one such work, and it earns this column's top marks.

Marchetto's ***Cancer Vixen*** (Knoft, $22) pulls you into the story from its first line:

*"**What** happens when a shoe-crazy, lipstick-obsessed, wine-swilling, pasta-slurping, fashion-fanatic, single-forever, about-to-get-married big-city girl cartoonist (me, Marisa Acocella) with a fabulous life finds ... **a lump in her breast?!?**"*



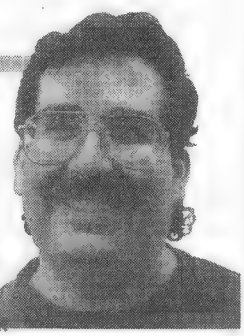
Marchetto's credits include *The New Yorker, Glamour, The New York Times,* and *Modern Bride.* At 43, she was mere months away from marrying "It" restaurateur Silvano Marchetto when she learned she had breast cancer. In 212 full-color, often frenzied, always eye-catching pages, she brings readers completely into her New York City world.

We meet her friends, her family, and her wonderful Silvano. More than meet them, actually. She makes us feel as if we know them as well as we know our own friends and family members.

There are moments in the book when laughing out loud seems the only appropriate response. There are other moments, such as when Marchetto realizes she'll never give birth, when I felt tears creep into the corners of my eye. Testimony to her storytelling skills, the only tear I actually shed came in the final pages of the book, when her living a long and happy life seems as certain as it can be for any cancer survivor.

Like Engleberg's book, *Cancer Vixen* is a funny and uplifting tale. Also like Engleberg's book, it's a graphic novel that every serious comics reader should own and read. Our usual disembodied, grinning reviewer heads would be out of place in reviews of books on dealing with cancer, but I can still award Marchetto the highest honor this column has to offer.

Top marks, Mrs. Marchetto, and my regards to your magnificent Silvano. I hope my daughter will someday marry a man who defines a loving husband as well as does your husband.



TONY ISABELLA, comics writer and author, has been appearing in CBG since #3 in 1971. Review items can be sent to P.O. Box 1502, Medina, OH 44258. Check out his website at ***www.wfcomics.com/tony***, or e-mail him at *tony@wfcomics.com*!

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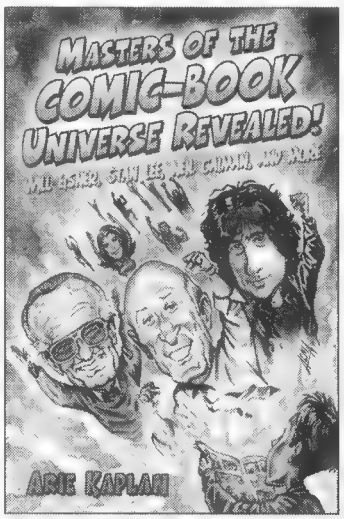

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DEADBEATS #80

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REVIEWS

PICK OF THE MONTH COMIC BOOK

Captain America #22

Marvel

$2.99, color, 32 pgs., available now

Writer: Ed Brubaker; Artists: Mike Perkins, Frank D'Armata

reviewed by **George Nelson** ★★★★

Captain America may be one of the central characters of "Civil War," but this issue of the character's own title tying into the Marvel event puts the focus on perhaps the most important member of the series' supporting cast: S.H.I.E.L.D. agent Sharon Carter.

Set against the backdrop of "Civil War," the core of this story is Sharon's exploration of her conflicted loyalties — her devotion to duty versus her recently rekindled feelings for Cap — as she undergoes a psychiatric evaluation following a rendezvous with Cap and the botched capture attempt by her fellow S.H.I.E.L.D. agents. At the same time, the tale provides a window on the longtime Avenger's reasons for opposing the Superhuman Registration Act. Writer Ed Brubaker's tale is nicely complemented by the work of Mike Perkins and Frank D'Armata, who employs a muted color palette that effectively enhances the mood.

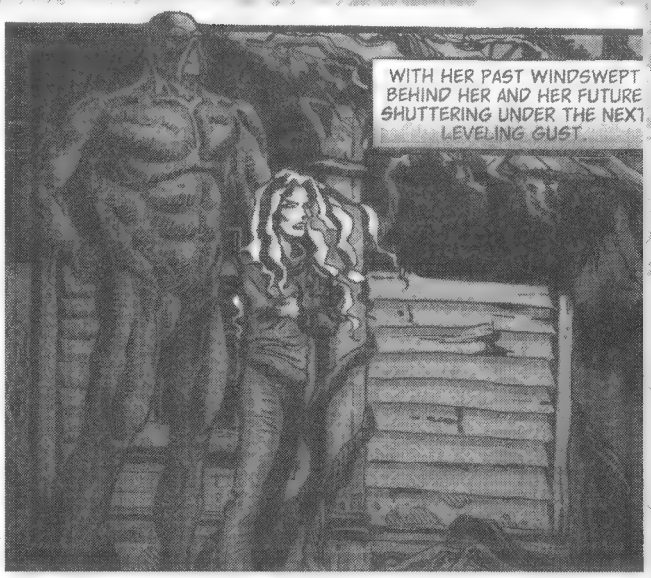
The payoff comes at the end of the issue, a scene with two of Cap's oldest foes — including an adversary who comes as a surprise but one particularly appropriate for a tale focusing on Sharon — that completely upends the revived Sharon-Steve relationship.

www.marvel.com

Swamp Thing #29

DC/Vertigo

$2.99, color, 32 pgs., available now
Writer: Joshua Dysart; Artist: Enrique Breccia
reviewed by **Timothy J. Wood** ★½



The latest iteration of *Swamp Thing* goes out with a whimper, not a bang.

The carnage finally ends as the Good Gumbo man vanquishes King Toad's forces of evil and reconciles with Abigail. There's a hint that Woodrue may not be quite finished with Swamp Thing, but the final scene of Alec and Abigail watching the sun set over the swamp bodes more peaceful times ahead.

But do we care?

This entire series seems to have been more about violent bloodshed than developing the characters. We were treated to a series of bizarre, depraved creatures intent on testing and/or conquering Swamp Thing to no real purpose or end. We learned a bit about Alec's college days and saw the reunification of the Alec-mind with the Swamp God, all intriguing bits of storytelling that somehow got lost in the sea of blood and guts. Granted, this is a horror comic, but the attempts to shock overcame any of the more interesting story elements. The best thing about this final issue is Eric Powell's cover showing a not unhappy Swamp Thing shambling off into the dark swamp, perhaps happy to be done with this series.

www.dccomics.com

Spawn #160-161

Image

$2.95@, color, 32 pgs.@, available now
Writer: David Hine; Artists: Philip Tan, et al.
reviewed by **Ray Sidman** ★★★½

It's been a long damn(ed) while since I reviewed an issue of *Spawn*, but this pair of issues is well worth it. Something Spawn fans (including me) have waited for since first buying #1 off the rack has happened: The Apocalypse is no longer nigh — it's here in all its Hellish glory, courtesy of writer David Hine and artist Philip Tan.

Granny Blake, Cyan, Wanda, Terry, and Al/Spawn — the gang's all here. And, on the other side of the board we have Mammon, God, Satan, God and Satan's mother/father entity (stick with me here), and lots of all-around evilness-type beings.

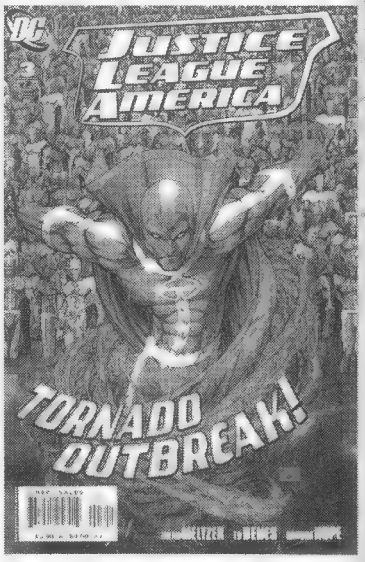
When Hine took over writing some 10 issues ago, he said the Apocalypse was coming; he delivers it well. By the end of #161, the world has literally gone to Hell, and the body count has more zeroes than Bill Gates' savings account. While this is hardly an ideal jumping-on spot for new readers (best time for that was when Hine took over the writing), longtime and recent fans should be cheering at the fruition of this development. This might also be a good time to return for readers who stopped reading; the story is well worth rejoining the series.

www.imagecomics.com

Justice League of America #3

DC

$2.99, color, 32 pgs., available now
Writer: Brad Meltzer; Artists: Ed Benes, Sandra Hope
reviewed by **Tim Lasiuta** ★½



What a score for DC Comics: Brad Meltzer writing *Justice League of America*. However, with such a high-profile novelist can come a downside. Sure, his name will attract readers who may not normally buy comic books, but the skills that create a regular comic book are not necessarily those that make a novel good.

This story arc is case in point. In this issue, the Tornado encounters The Phantom Stranger at the grave of Boston Brand, Black Lightning tackles Tornado clones, and two other plot threads run in the 20-plus pages of story. The trouble comes if this is the only issue you pick up for the run. If you have been following the entire thread from *JLA* and other DC universe books, connect the dots: As a novel, this would be pages 23-45, and you would turn the page to Chapter Four. Problem solved. But this is not.

Artwise, it is outstanding. Benes and Hope do a marvelous job of rendering the scenes, and the use of black space is intelligent.

Recommended if you read the series — in sequence.

www.dccomics.com

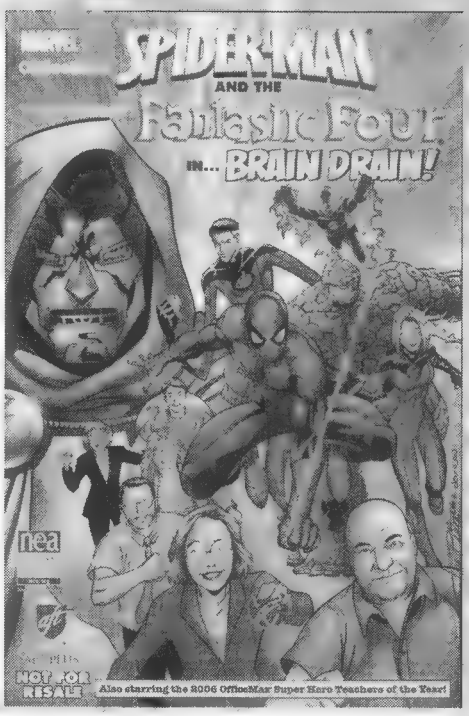
Spider-Man and the Fantastic Four in Brain Drain!

Marvel/OfficeMax

Free, color, 22 pgs., available now

Writer: Tom DeFalco; Artists: Ron Lim, Pat Davidson, Mostafa Moussa

reviewed by **Tony DiGerolamo** ★



While I commend Marvel's pro-teacher stand that goes so far as to put actual teachers on the cover and profiles in the back, I have to say, "You gotta be kidding me."

The plot: Doctor Doom kidnaps all the smart students and it's up to our heroes and their teachers to save them. Of course, without OfficeMax's handy office supplies, they are lost. It's pretty ridiculous. Although I agree with the sentiments of the comic book, watching our heroes shamelessly shill for an office supply store is a little disconcerting. While I have to admit, stores like OfficeMax are my home away from home, the conclusion using OfficeMax supplies to defeat Doom is likely to send fans into a lather. It's a shame, because the opening works with Peter Parker protecting one of his students.

A better plot might have been a fight inside an OfficeMax store without all the "With all these supplies to choose from … there's something here for every student." I mean, you can almost see Spider-Man doing this and maybe even the Fantastic Four, but Doom? This is a guy who had the power of The Beyonder. Doom shills for no one!

www.marvel.com

Blue Beetle #7

DC

$2.99, color, 32 pgs., available now

Writer: John Rogers; Artist: Cully Hammer

reviewed by **S.A. Bennett** ★★

New Blue Beetle Jaime Reyes and family take a trip out to where he first fell to Earth in #1. There he learns more about how his scarab works, then flashes back to his first mission as a super-hero which had him teaming up with Batman, Black Canary, and Green Arrow to fight Brother Eye and an army of OMACs in outer space.

To be honest, I haven't been all that crazy about this incarnation of the character. It's taken an inordinate amount of time for the series to get going. (*Ultimate Spider-Man* can get away with this kind of extended decompressed storytelling; a *Blue Beetle* can't.) While the book has rejected conventional super-heroic situations, it hasn't provided any real alternatives to them.

But this issue was enjoyable. The highlight is a wonderful moment when Jaime asks Batman, "What kind of psycho nut job built Brother Eye" in the first place? But what makes the story is, it actually considers that Jaime might be horrified to be in these sorts of situations.

www.dccomics.com

X-Men: First Class #1

Marvel

$2.99, color, 32 pgs., available now

Writer: Jeff Parker; Artist: Roger Cruz

reviewed by **Brett Weiss** ★★★

The premise of this eight-issue series is to tell previously untold stories of the first X-Men team, the one Stan Lee and Jack Kirby created in 1963. The group comprises Cyclops, Marvel Girl, Angel, Beast, and Iceman, with Professor X leading the way. The first issue does an excellent job of establishing the personalities and powers of each member within the confines of the story, which is helped via narration provided by Bobby Drake in a letter to his parents.

The dilemma here is an attack by exotic plants that would make DC's Poison Ivy green with envy. The X-Men use teamwork to tackle the botanical baddies but, with an assist from Professor X, the young mutants discover that things aren't quite what they seem. Readers are given a heavy-handed environmental lesson, and the issue wraps up in an "aw shucks" kind of way that may have veterans heading for the Astonishing hills.

The modern art style and anachronistic references are off-putting, but this is a nice, accessible issue for younger readers.

www.marvel.com

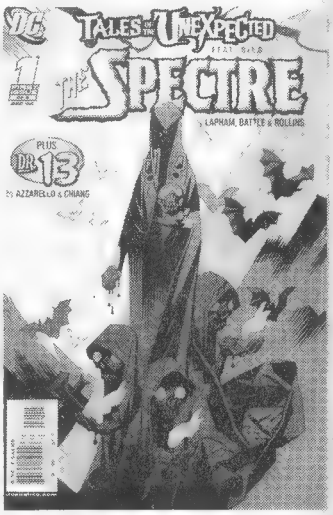
Tales of the Unexpected #1

DC

$3.99, color, 52 pgs., available now

Writers: David Lapham, Brian Azzarello; Artists: Various

reviewed by **Tim Lasiuta** ★★



The Spectre is hard to define. It is easier to say what he is not. He is not alive. He is not dead. He does not wander the Earth with disinterest. From the early Jerry Siegel/Bernard Baily tales of the 1940s and Michael Fleisher/Jim Aparo stories of the 1970s — to the present re-incarnation of The Spectre — he was, and still is, a cop. However, this time, he is Crispus Allen, not the earlier character Jim Corrigan.

"The Cold Hand of Vengeance" is a chilling tale of murder in a slum. When a seedy slumlord is found murdered, an entire building is suspect. As police investigate the crime, The Spectre slides in and out of the lives of the six floors of tenants. Lapham and team present The Spectre as the Spirit of Vengeance: dedicated to the righteous justice any crime deserves.

Spectre fans will like this, and the Mignola cover is awesome. The only problem is the storytelling method's having problems consistently presenting the otherworldly switches with physical-world narrative. Is this Spectre as powerful as the Wrath of God? It's hard to tell so far. Nevertheless, if The Spectre can influence rats to kill or escape, his powers can only get more intense.

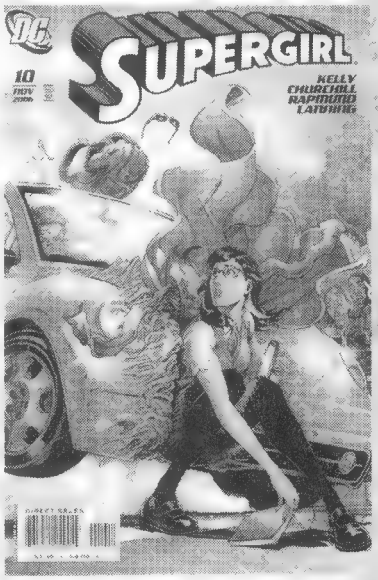
www.dccomics.com

Supergirl #10

DC

$2.99, color, 32 pgs., available now

Writer: Joe Kelly; Artist: Ian Churchill



Supergirl establishes a civilian identity to experience high school life — and, not surprisingly, doesn't like it one bit. But instead of making the best of it, she bails and, except for when she touches base with Wonder Girl (who's busy grappling with a French-speaking gorilla), that's pretty much all there is to this issue.

As usual, Joe Kelly plays with genre conventions and reader expectations, giving us a Supergirl who (1) really isn't a super-hero and (2) isn't very nice.

She's sullen, mean, and entirely too sexualized for 16 years old. (In previous issues we've seen her smoke, get tattooed, and wear a trashy outfit on her date with a much older guy. What a great role model for girls.) Though to be fair, writer Joe Kelly litters the script with scenes from her past showing she didn't have the happiest of childhoods.

She's incredibly powerful and deeply troubled, so naturally Superman and company have no problem letting her wander around completely unsupervised to work things out for herself. Way to go, geniuses.

www.dccomics.com

Amazing Spider-Man #535

Marvel

$2.99, color, 32 pgs., available now

Writer: J. Michael Straczynski; Artists: Ron Garney, Bill Reinhold

reviewed by **George Nelson** ★★½

Guilt drives this "Civil War" tie-in, which has Peter questioning his current loyalties. Already harboring doubts about this support for Iron Man's pro-registration stance, he is pushed to rethink his position when confronted with the reality facing those who refuse to comply with registration. The philosophical conflict between Peter and Tony Stark brings to the surface the anti-establishment flavor that has defined Spider-Man for years, and his ultimate decision, regardless of the personal cost, should come as no surprise.

Where readers may fault with the story is in its portrayal of Reed Richards, who cites the anti-communist witch hunts of the McCarthy era, of all things, in justifying his support for the act. It's also hard to reconcile Richards as portrayed here with the character shown in Fantastic Four for most of the past 45 years: His argument that "the law is the law" rings particularly hollow, coming from someone who took a rocket for an unauthorized flight in his first comics appearance and who not long ago took over a foreign country in defiance of the government.

www.marvel.com

Retro OBLIGATORY FIGHT SCENE!

Avengers #16 (May 65)

Marvel

12¢, color, 32 pgs., available now
Writer: Stan Lee; Artists: Jack Kirby, Dick Ayers
reviewed by **"Juicy" Jim Johnson and "Jolly" John Petty**

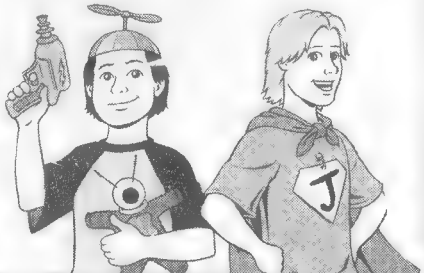
John Petty: Wow. Just … wow. This is what's so great about Marvel: No matter what you think is gonna happen, Stan and Jack go in a completely different direction! Last issue, they killed Baron Zemo! Killed! Really dead! For good! And now, all the old Avengers — except Cap — quit! Can you imagine Batman and Superman and Wonder Woman quitting The JLA? DC would never do that! And, best of all, who replaces them? Villains! Two evil mutants and a guy with a bow! How cool is that? This comic was great before, but now it's getting even better! I thought they were going to make a big mistake a few issues ago, when they asked Spider-Man to join (How dumb an idea is that? Stan would never do anything that stupid!), but everything worked out great in the end. This book rocks!

Jim Johnson: Yeah, two evil mutants and a guy with a bow. Just who I want to see in The Avengers. I thought they were supposed to be "Earth's Mightiest Heroes." Instead, we go from an Asgardian god, a giant, and a guy with a really cool suit of armor with weapons to a guy who shoots arrows, a guy who can run fast, and his dumb sister. Whoopee. This is the dumbest thing Stan's ever done. Who cares about these characters? So what if they were villains? The Avengers are supposed to be strong enough to fight the foes no single hero can withstand, remember? This new group would get their butts kicked by Loki or Kang or The Masters of Evil. So who are they going to fight now? The milkman? The paperboy? I hope Stan realizes how bad this is and brings back Thor and Iron Man. And I hope Spider-Man joins and Hawkeye gets killed. So there.

Petty: You're so stupid. Neither of those things is ever going to happen. You might as well hope that Daredevil gets thrown in jail and Bucky comes back from the dead. Don't be a moron. What's cool about this is that The Avengers are now the "Anti-JLA." You've got: Cap, who's really Batman without all the stuff; Hawkeye, who's the Dark Green Arrow; Quicksilver, the Reverse Flash; and the Scarlet Witch as Bad Zatanna. It's so twisted it just might work! And Hawkeye was good enough to kick Iron Man's butt, and Quicksilver and Wanda fought The X-Men, so they could, too, take on Loki or Kang or any of those other guys. Besides, how many mistakes have Stan and Jack made before — besides Paste Pot Pete … and The Painter … and Egghead … and The Living Eraser? And … oh, forget it. The point is this is going to be great, and, if you can't see that, you're just not a Fearless Front Facer any more, so hand in your MMMS badge!

Johnson: Quicksilver and The Scarlet Witch had Magneto on their side, who's, like, the coolest villain ever. You won't see these "New Avengers" fighting anyone like him or Doctor Doom. They'd be demolished. Sounds like Paste Pot Pete and Egghead are about all they can stand up to now. The Avengers are supposed to be Marvel's answer to The JLA, right? But now they're just a bunch of nobodies. Well, at least Cap's still in, but you watch; everybody's going to hate this, and some of the old team will be back before long. I think I'm going to start reading Justice League of America instead, because you're right about one thing, even though you're a poop-brain: DC would never mess around with The JLA.

Petty: Yeah, wake me up when The JLA get back from fighting the Giant Noodle People of Planet Boring. These "New Avengers" are so cool; they'll be around forever. Mark my words, this is the first and last time you'll ever see an Avengers line-up change. And you're still a moron.



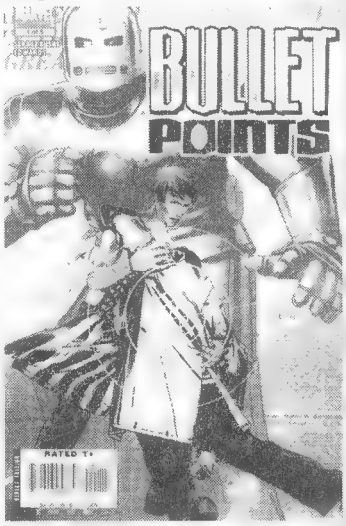
Bullet Points #1

Marvel

$2.99, color, 48 pgs., available now

Writer: J. Michael Straczynski; Artist: Tommy Lee Edwards

reviewed by **Michael Tierney** ★★★



"Bullet points" normally refer to key information. This issue presents an interesting alternate reality of the Marvel universe, where the points of bullets shot 24 hours earlier than in normal continuity dramatically changed history and the lives of several heroes.

What would have happened if, during the early days of World War II, an MP named Ben Parker and the professor who'd invented the Super Soldier serum had been killed together by a hail of Nazi bullets? Captain America never came to be.

But that didn't stop Steve Rogers from becoming an American hero. Rogers still became the guinea pig in a secret experiment, when he volunteered to wear the Iron Man armor. But, whereas Tony Starks welded himself into the armor to save a damaged heart, in this reality the suit's electrodes were intentionally implanted directly into the wearer's heart, without the possibility of removal, as a security measure.

And how will Peter Parker's life be affected without the influence of Uncle Ben? The hints are explosive — of a gamma type. It's worth checking out.

www.marvel.com

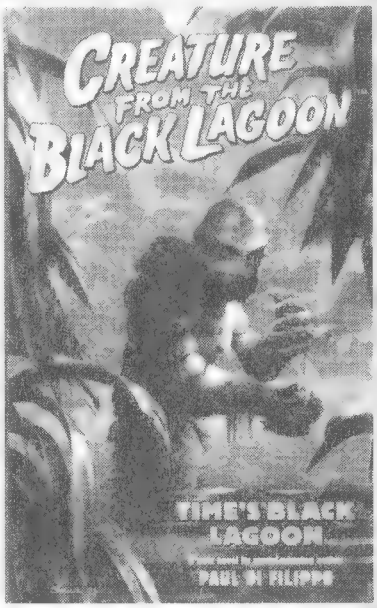
Creature from the Black Lagoon: Time's Black Lagoon

Dark Horse

$6.99, 301 pgs., available now

Writer: Paul Di Filippo

reviewed by **Tim Lasiuta** ★★½



Shades of H.G. Wells! Paul Di Filippo takes readers back and forth through time from the Devonian Age to 2015, all with the technological advancement of a Timepod.

Let's step back. This is a novel about the passing of a torch, the resurrection of a burning desire to investigate exactly what The Gill Man was, where he came from, and why he disappeared from the earthly landscape. It is also about the foibles of human curiosity and our stubborn, turn-a-blind-eye focus on what we want to do.

Not only is there romance in the Devonian, there is also danger from giant sharks, discovery of colonies of seaborne life, and the possible contamination of a previously unheard-of species. Di Filippo even adds an ancient crash site, but you should read the book before anyone tells you more,

www.darkhorse.com

ISBN: 1-59582-033-7

Amazing Spider-Girl #1

Marvel

$2.99, color, 32 pgs., available now

Writer: Tom DeFalco; Artists: Ron Frenz, Sal Buscema

reviewed by **Kurt Anthony Krug** ★★

Believed to have been canceled after #100, Spider-Girl — Marvel's longest running female solo series —refuses to die. The little-series-that-could is relaunched as The Amazing Spider-Girl. Set in DeFalco's MC2 universe, a not-too-distant future that isn't full of the gloom and doom that characterizes most Marvel futures, May "Mayday" Parker has regained her powers and is keeping them secret from her parents, Peter and Mary Jane. Not only has Mayday been relaunched; word is that the MC2 universe's version of The Avengers will be getting another shot.

DeFalco brings back the original Hobgoblin and is setting up a major battle between Hobby and Mayday. It's interesting to see DeFalco and Frenz use Hobgoblin, considering that they were so heavily involved in the mystery surrounding his early appearances during their 1980s run on The Amazing Spider-Man. While Mayday's series is set in the future, it has a retro feel to it in many ways, harkening back to, not only their 1980s work, but also to the Stan Lee/Steve Ditko Spidey stories.

www.marvel.com

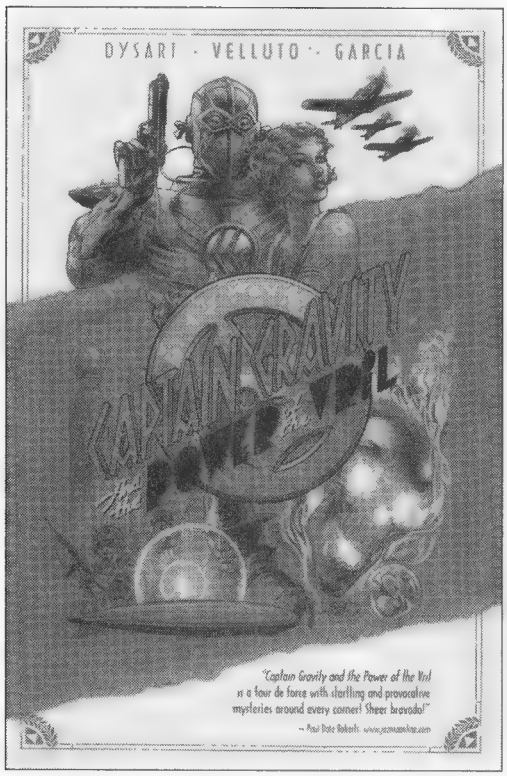
Penny for your thoughts?

A pair of paperbacks from Penny-Farthing

by KAREN O'BRIEN

Somewhere between the time Letterman signed off and the dryer finished baking my blue jeans, I continued my quest to read through the books I'd picked up this year at Comic-Con International: San Diego. I started with a pair of graphic novels from Penny-Farthing Press and quickly forgot about the dryer. The Penny-Farthing booth at Comic-Con had been across the aisle from ***CBG***'s booth, and I'd been drawn to two of their titles in particular: *Captain Gravity and the Power of the Vril* and *Para*. Though I could kick myself for waiting to read them, these stunning graphic novels were well worth the hopelessly wrinkled jeans I found in the dryer hours later.

Captain Gravity and the Power of the Vril
Collects #1-6
$19.99

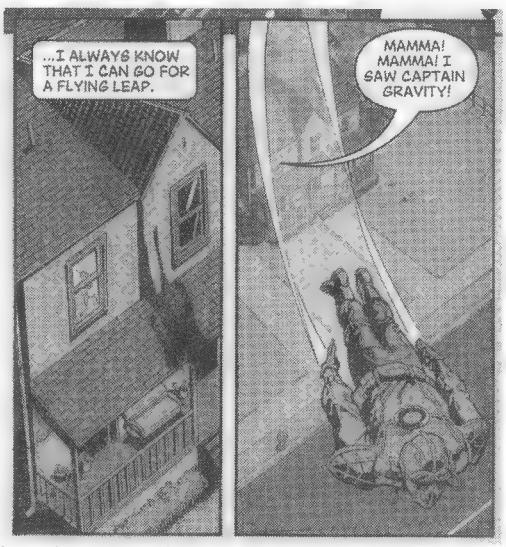


Writer: Joshua Dysart

Art: Sal Velluto pencils; Bob Almond, Joe Rubenstein, Sal Velluto inks; Mike Garcia colors.

Captain Gravity and the Power of the Vril is an intelligent and gorgeous rocket ride employing the finest pulp fiction conventions.

Following the grand tradition of matinee movie serials and such modern adaptations as *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*, *Captain Gravity* reads like a brilliant comic-book adaptation of a movie that was never made. It has the best movie serial elements, including a hero still



learning to use his powers, a damsel in distress, globetrotting pursuit, and an almost supernatural villain. Trust me: The only thing missing from this comic book is the popcorn.

The first-class presentation of this collection is so polished that the story flows seamlessly from chapter to chapter — and what a story it is! Writer Joshua Dysart places his tale amid the rising global tensions of the late 1930s and uses a diverse cast of solid characters to deftly address the ethnic and racial conditions of a world on the verge of war.

Joshua Jones escaped the racial prejudices of the Depression-era South to work on B-movies in Hollywood. He is also Captain Gravity, endowed with command over gravity by the ancient and mysterious Element 115. The action begins when Joshua's best friend, movie starlet Chase Dubois, becomes a spy for the U.S. government and discovers the Nazi's globe-bending archaeological search for the swastika's origins.

Treated to appearances by British agent Ian Fleming and a young Adolf Hitler, we learn that many cultures through the centuries utilized the swastika symbol. Eventually, our hero learns that it is really the symbol of the vril, the energy that drives the universe, as

used by the people of Atlantis. I'm not going to give away the ending or anything, but I will tell you that this page-turner is so engrossing that you'll lose track of time.

The art is a refreshing nod to favorite styles of the past that incorporates all of the best of modern techniques with a beautiful attention to detail. Mike Garcia's wonderfully appropriate colors are earthy and rich and reminiscent in places of sepia-toned photographs.

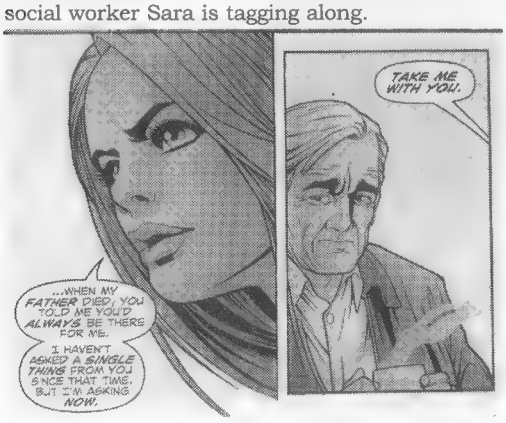
ISBN: 0-9719012-8-7

Stuart Moore's Para
Collects #1-6
$19.95
Writer: Stuart Moore
Art: Pablo Villalobos, Claude St. Aubin, and Federico Zumel pencils; Mostfa Moussa and James Taylor inks; and Mike Garcia colors.

Science fiction has its share of sub-genres, but, when you look at the big picture, it can be broken up into two categories, "hard" and "soft." Though the categories are much debated by fans, broad definitions are possible. Hard SF turns on some element of science or technology, where soft SF places science and technology in the background and turns on some element of characterization.

Stuart Moore's Para is a masterpiece of hard SF guaranteed to appeal to soft SF fans and anyone who enjoys a good mystery. The story involves particle physics and the failure of the world's largest particle accelerator but it's also about a daughter's determination to solve the mystery of her father's death. *Para* exemplifies the soul of science fiction through its believable scientific premise and its pervasive and engaging sense of humanity.

Dr. William Erie engineered the Supercollider, the world's largest particle accelerator, underneath the Texas desert. Through flashbacks, readers learn that young Sara Erie is on the path to a scientific career, when a disaster at the Supercollider results in the death of her father and his entire team. The resultant radiation renders the facility inoperable and uninhabitable — or so everyone believes. When radiation levels have dropped off 20 years later, the university sends a team to explore the site, and social worker Sara is tagging along.



What they *don't* find are the bodies of the original scientific team. Instead, the word "Para" is written throughout the facility in blood, like the missing Virginia colonists who left behind the word "Croatoan" on Roanoke Island. But the government's representatives haven't been exactly honest with the university and the world about the "accident" and its extra-dimensional implications.

The Supercollider's first experiments produced strange quark particles and opened a gateway to a dimension inhabited by "para" creatures who feed on the strange quarks. The government agreed to leave the Supercollider active and on low power, so that the para creatures would have food but didn't realize that the build-up of those particles over time would cause strangelets. The problem with strangelets is that they are endlessly combining and attracting other particles until nothing is left — like a worm capable of eating the universe.

The team struggles to shut down the Supercollider and close the dimensional gateway, but first Sara has to communicate the situation to the para creatures and enlist their help to save the universe.

Artistically, the book is a triumph. The warm colors and soft lines used when the characters are above ground give way to muted hues, deep shadows, and thick inks when the underground action takes place. The flashbacks have a sepia-toned look to them that nicely differentiates the past from the present.

This refreshing story also earns my praise for resisting the temptation to have something deadly waiting around every underground corner. Not that people don't die in this story — They do, but there is a purpose and a plan at work here that doesn't rely on every SF cliché used since *Alien* scared us witless. Thanks, Stuart.

ISBN: 0-9719012-4-4
www.pfp-press.com

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Tour of the INDIES

INDEPENDENT AND SMALL PRESS

REVIEWS

PICK OF THE MONTH INDY

Vault of Michael Allred
AAA Pop Comics
$6.99, color, 64 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: Michael Allred
reviewed by **Timothy J. Wood** ★★★★

There's so much packed into these pages it's hard to know where to start, and this is just the first issue. Allred digs deep into his archives on this admittedly self-indulgent project, following his career chronologically beginning with an early unpublished comics project called They! followed by a half-dozen Grendel pages he submitted to Comico in 1986. Sketches, paintings, press clippings, promo drawings, advertisements, and photos galore follow, covering Allred's Graphique Musique (later Muzik) days at Caliber as well as early Madman stuff.

This is all incredible fun, especially the glimpses Allred provides into the evolution of his career through not only sketches and press clippings about his work, but such priceless ephemera as his first check stub from Marvel (for Everyman), a letter from Renegade canceling Dead Air, and a 20th Century Fox letter declining to license Madman. There are early reviews, a rare promotion Madman balsa wood glider, reproductions of every cover Allred has drawn, and flip-action corners.

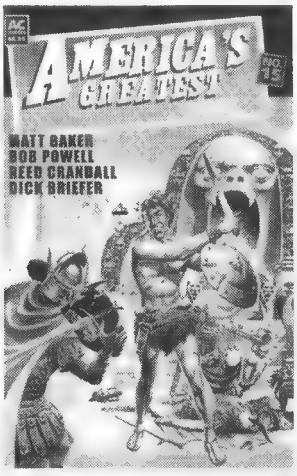
Some new work is here, and more is promised for future issues. Reading the clippings and Allred's running commentary is a bit eye-straining, but it's a small price to pay for this amazingly comprehensive package.

www.aaapop.com

America's Greatest Comics #15

AC Comics

$6.95, b/w, 48 pgs., available now
Writers and artists: Various
reviewed by **Michael Tierney** ★



With a special focus on the artists of the Golden and Atom Ages, this issue keys on the work of "Good Girl" artist Bob Powell. Also included is art by E.C. master Reed Crandall, the "headlights" specialist Matt Baker, and Spider-Man's first artist, Steve Ditko.

What drew my attention to this title was the gorgeous cover by legendary Wally Wood, portraying what is obviously actor Victor Mature in the role of Conan the Barbarian, from an illustration originally published as the dust wrapper for the Gnome Press *Return of Conan* hardcover.

If that sounds like an interesting variety of artists, then you'll love the scope of the subject material. The stories run the gamut, including a swashbuckling pirate tale of Captain Daring, femmes fatales Glory Forbes and Kitty Carson, a tale about the Monster of Frankenstein, Ditko's metaphysical "The Doorway," and a smattering of excerpts ranging from detective to romance to war stories.

There's a little bit of something for everyone in this issue, all of it rendered with classic art from the early ages of comics.

www.accomics.com

Model Operandi #1

After Hours Press

$5.99, color, 88 pgs., available now
Writers and artists: Dennis Budd, Joe Caramagna
reviewed by **Ray Sidman** ★★½

This is one of those instances when I remind readers that a two-star grade equals "thumbs up," so this is well within the positive territory. The comic book lacks innovation but entertains, nonetheless.

The super-spy action-adventure yarn features big guns, hot babes, and utterly fanboy-sized breasts. Granted, they're done in the name of satire — and there are even some babes of human-like body proportions — but the bigger the hero, the bigger the gun, and the bigger the heroine, the bigger the … well, you get the picture.

Much of the satire has been done before, but that doesn't mean it's not funny. In fact, the humor works fine throughout most of the three chapters of this international espionage story. As Chris Eliopoulos said in the book's intro, "Sometimes we just need some mindless fun that we don't have to think too much about. Throw in gunfights, explosions, and lots of boobs, and we're there." Yup, that sums up *Model Operandi* nicely.

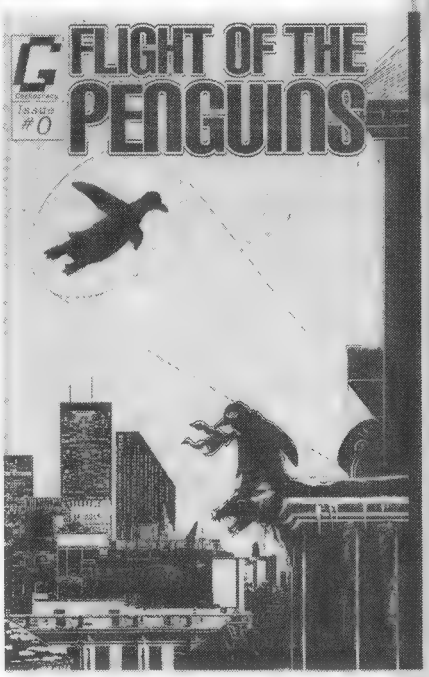
So, for you fanboys who sometimes like reading with your cerebral light switch in the "Off" position: This book's for you.

www.ahpcomics.com

Flight of the Penguins #0

Geekocracy

Free, b/w, 8 pgs., available now
Writer: Mason Johnson; Artist: Greg Barley
reviewed by **Tony DiGerolamo** ★★



This is a preview of an upcoming book. It was sort of an all-penguin version of Indiana Jones. Our hero is a penguin with aviator goggles and a scar. The villain (I assume) is the penguin with the Kaiser helmet and the scarf. Tell me again why penguins need scarves? I guess to show that it's cold. The Batman parody on the cover — a penguin shape in place of the Bat Signal — was mildly amusing.

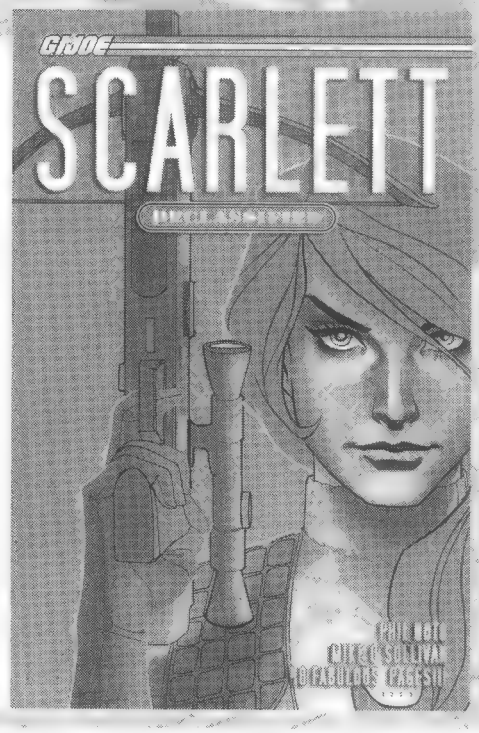
The art was OK. I think it's meant to take place in the '40s (the penguin '40s, I guess). It's a funny little concept; I just wish the creator had bothered to tell me a little something about the book in the nearly blank page on the inside cover. I don't know if you can sustain a "serious" pulp fiction adventure comic with penguins for long. It seems to me the novelty would wear off very quickly. Still, I think it might be good for a few laughs. Keep an eye out for it.

www.geekocracy.org

Scarlett: Declassified #1

Devil's Due

$4.95, color, 40 pgs., available now
Writer: Mike O'Sullivan; Artist: Phil Noto
reviewed by **Kurt Anthony Krug** ★★★



The origin of Snake-Eyes' love interest, Scarlett, occurs in this Devil's Due *Declassified* installment. Shana O'Hara was the youngest of five children and began her martial arts training when she was 9. Mike O'Sullivan stays true to the core of the character Larry Hama created and expands on it. We learn that Scarlett was the apple of her father's eye and they butted heads because they were too much alike. We also learn that Scarlett has a law degree and was an FBI agent before being recruited into the G.I. Joe team.

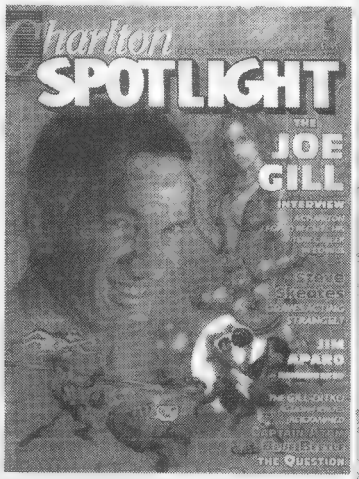
And, yes, O'Sullivan confirms what we've assumed for years: She got her code-name from the 1939 classic *Gone with the Wind* and because of her red hair. O'Sullivan nicely ties this story in to Marvel's *G.I. Joe* #26 — told again in last year's *Snake-Eyes: Declassified* — where Snakes-Eyes and Scarlett are on the ferry, trading origin stories. Here, we finally learn hers. Let's hope we'll see more *Declassified* stories with Duke, Flint, Destro, Jinx, *etc.*

www.devilsdue.net

Charlton Spotlight #5

Argo Press

$7.95, b/w, 80 pgs., available now
Writers and artists: Various
reviewed by **Timothy J. Wood** ★★★½



Starting off with a long profile of a Charlton institution, writer Joe Gill, this issue continues *Charlton Spotlight*'s detailed exploration of one of comics history's major "minor" publishers. According to a note from Editor Michael Ambrose, Gill wrote an estimated 52,000-plus pages of Charlton comics most of them uncredited stories in the company's anthology titles or its licensed properties, from *Konga* to *The Flintstones*.

Mark Burbey chronicles the creation of Charlton's most successful super-hero, Captain Atom, by Gill and frequent collaborator Steve Ditko. Other features spotlight the Blue Beetle's Charlton runs, a look at text stories by Ramon Schenk, and a salute to the late Jim Aparo by Steve Skeates.

Skeates also provides a fascinating, intricately detailed, behind-the-scenes exposé of his collaboration with Ditko on the story "The Ultimate Evil," from *The Many Ghosts of Dr. Graves* #12. The Charlton Comics Checklist continues, and there's a reprint of a 1958 science-fiction story from *Space Adventures* #25, with art by Ditko and story (probably) by Gill. Ambrose continues to perform an invaluable service by keeping Charlton alive through this thoughtfully written, nicely packaged publication.

www.charltonspotlight.com

Cry Yourself to Sleep

Top Shelf

$7, b/w, 88 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: Jeremy Tinder
reviewed by **Ray Sidman** ★★★

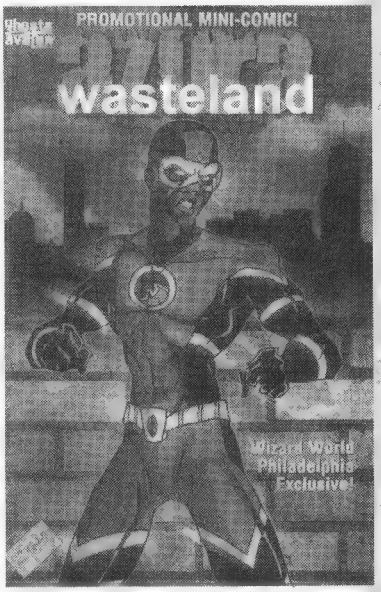
Jeremy Tinder uses melancholy and humor juxtaposed to present the lives of three characters who seek for and need a happier life. Jim is a rabbit struggling to pay bills; Andy, the novelist, has problems coping with criticism of his writing; and a character simply identified as The Robot wants to be a better person.

Tinder's writing is both clever and insightful, making for a story that readers won't put down. The characters, though surreal, are easy to empathize with, and their situations are all too familiar to the everyman. His art is nothing new, though it is well-done and complements the story. In particular, the facial expressions of his characters — though they won't wow — perfectly convey the situation with which they're dealing.

The book shows promise, and it's to be expected that more of Tinder's work will be well worth reading. His ability to tell a story that involves readers and makes them look at their lives a little more closely is a talent always to be desired in any medium of literature.

www.topshelfcomix.com
ISBN: 1-891830-81-3

Azura Wasteland
Ghost of Avalon
Free, b/w, 8 pgs., available now
Writers and artists: Various
reviewed by **Tony DiGerolamo** ★



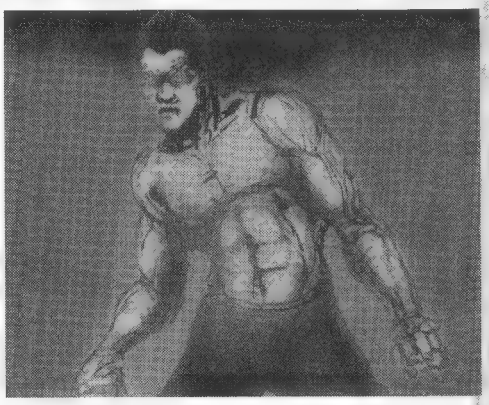
I hate "exclusives" and their hell-spawned brethren, variant covers. It's bad enough when a well-financed publisher engages in squeezing the fans for more flash for quick cash, but when a new, indie publisher starts this way — well, it's not a good sign.

For some rookie creators, super-hero universes are so standard that many creators see no point in explaining the ins and outs of their particular super-hero universe. I think the mentality is, "Forget all that, let's just get to the fight!" That cart-before-the-horse thinking is probably what helped put together this mini-comic.

Cut to a super-hero in his secret identity trying to get a job in the "Azure Wasteland." (Whatever that is.) He fights for justice on the streets at night, but can't get a regular job in the day. It's like the creators are saying, "You know the rest of the story; just fill in the rest." Half the book is a compilation of hero stats which reads more like a supplement for the *Villains and Vigilantes* role-playing game. Please guys, develop this more before you publish.

www.awupdate.blogspot.com

Amerikan Freak #1
Spacedog
$2.99, color, 32 pgs., available now
Writers and artists: Various
reviewed by **Ray Sidman** ★★



The first thing that catches the eye is on the cover, where it notes one of the story's creators has the surname "Zappa." (Who doesn't enjoy late patriarch Frank Zappa's *Läther*?)

With only the first issue available so far, this series hasn't impressed much. It's decent and worth reading a few issues to see how it does. Right now, however, it has the feel of many a clichéd my-buddy-returns-from-the-dead stories.

The art is of similar quality, largely because it looks as if Clay Sparks hasn't decided in what kind of style he wants to illustrate, blurred, thick black lines or loose, sharp-lined sketches? It bounces around, not only page to page, but also within various parts of individual panels. Perhaps this is the target style (let's give him credit and say it is); if so, it simply comes off looking as if he ran out of time to finish the product.

However, the writing is OK and the art isn't a complete turn-off. In fact, there's enough here to, as stated, warrant checking out #2 — and maybe even #3 and #4. But things need to pick up a few notches to make the book worth more than that.

www.spacedoghouse.com

Soulyard Newborn #1
Keeler and Openlander
Free, b/w, 20 pgs., available now
Writer: Jay Keeler; Artist: Nick Openlander
reviewed by **Tony DiGerolamo** ★★½

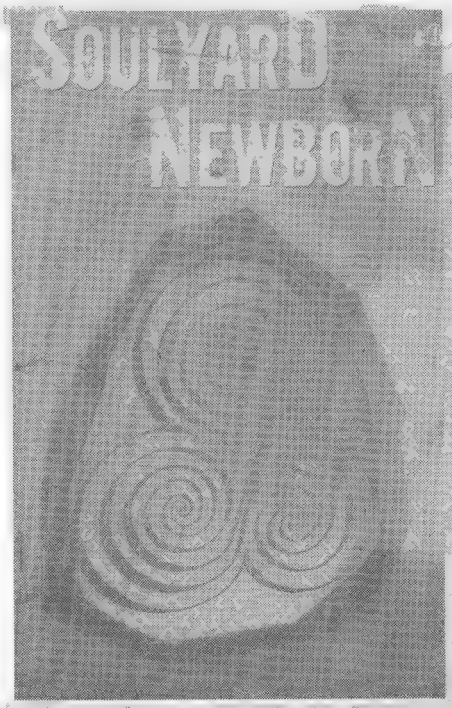
Soulyard Newborn has two stories: One is about a man in the future waking up and forgetting who he is. Some government types come to kill him, but his girlfriend kills them, saves him, and dies in the attempt. He escapes in a little robot.

The second story, which apparently is part of the first, is about a 15-year-old senior in high school. He has a terrible home life and everyone in high school hates him too. According to the back of the book, these two elements somehow tie together.

Openlander's pencils (which are not inked) are pretty nice as are Keeler's dialogue and pacing. Unfortunately, it's going to be difficult to find the second issue. There's no price, no publisher and no contact information in #1. There is copy promising that #2 is scheduled for release in December, but I don't know who is going to find it. It took a Google search to find their website, which is still under development.

If Keeler and Openlander want to find you, I guess they have some sort of plan. Maybe they're millionaires and they'll hit every comics store and convention in the country over the next year. Good luck, fellas!

www.soulyard.com



CSI: Dying in the Gutters #1-3
IDW Publishing

$3.99@, color, 32 pgs.@, available now
Writer: Steven Grant; Artist: Stephen Mooney
reviewed by **Jim Johnson and John Petty**

Jim Johnson: What a brilliant, wish-I'd-thoughta-that idea: IDW takes its successful publishing license for the popular CBS crime drama series and turns it inward, featuring the (fictitious) murder of real-life industry gossip-monger Rich Johnston during a Las Vegas comic con.

And the prime suspects, of course, are some of the industry's biggest names, like Joe Quesada, J. Michael Straczynski, and Peter David. Adhering to both the tone of the show and nuances of the industry, veteran writer Steven Grant deftly pulls off a rarity in this unusual series: a crossover between two genres and two media that actually entertains. This will be liked by fans of *CSI* and comics alike, especially those who follow the industry's behind-the-scenes stuff. In fact, the only people who probably won't appreciate this are, uh, well, you.

Petty: Or people who appreciate a story in which something actually happens or isn't just one big in-joke or actually features art that looks professional. This is a book that tries to be clever on a number of levels and ends up not working on any of them. The celebrity-guest-star moments seem forced and uncomfortable, while the CSI moments are dull and uninteresting. The art is awkward and ugly, much of it looking as if it's been badly traced from photo reference.

This book is only potentially funny to those who are featured in it or those for whom the debut of a new *Lying in the Gutters* column is the highlight of their week. And, at $3.99 an issue, this series delivers less actual story than your typical Nu-Marvel book. Who killed Rich Johnston? Who really cares?

Johnson: Sounds as if we have a motive here, Lieutenant. While artist Stephen Mooney does, indeed, rely way too much on photo references (one likeness in the first issue is even photostatted and used mere pages later, sheesh), Grant's story is one that was begging to be told.

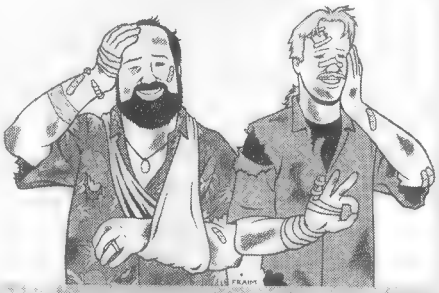
Johnston's column has frequently rubbed the rhubarb of many a comics pro, most if not all of the players have appeared at the same conventions, and the modified name of Johnston's column, already a play on words, readily lends itself to parody. No doubt that the real-life players will get a kick out of seeing their own likenesses, but so will many others. You're just jealous that you weren't invited to participate. Uh oh, sounds like another motive. Say, you weren't anywhere near Vegas that weekend, were you?

Petty: Do I have to say it? What happens in Vegas … Oh, you know the rest. "Begging to be told," though? By whom? Rich Johnston? The minuscule storms of controversy that Rich's column has provoked are the very definition of "tempest in a teapot," certainly not important enough outside a small (and ever-shrinking) circle to merit such extravagant hyperbole as "begging to be told."

Are you sure you're not being paid to write the slug copy for #4? Steven Grant is usually a good writer, but this one feels phoned in, written simply for the paycheck rather than out of any desire to actually tell a story. It's aimless, tired, and dying to be over. When a corpse stinks this bad, it's usually best to just replant it in the ground from which it came and forget about it. I highly recommend that course of action for this piece of drek.

Johnson: But, um, do you like it? Yes, the players are big fish in a small pond, but that's the point; this book has appeal well beyond our little molecule of comicdom. Any fans of the show who pick up this book won't know or care who these players are in real life; some may not even realize these people are real. But we comics fans get a bonus and a rare spotlight on our little hobby. Enjoy it for what it is.

www.idwpublishing.com



Darkman vs. Army of Darkness #1

Dynamite Entertainment

$3.50, color, 32 pgs., available now

Writers: Kurt Busiek, Roger Stern; Artist: James Fry

reviewed by **Timothy J. Wood** ★★½

The Book of the Dead surfaces once again, this time in the hands of Julia Hastings and her assistant, Byrnne Kelly, who unfortunately manage to translate some of the text. Across the city, there's an outbreak of dead-itis. As the Deadites carry Julie into the streets, her ex-fiancé (Dr. Peyton Westlake, aka Darkman) is there, but it's too late: Julie has been transformed into The Queen of Darkness. Sounds like a perfect match, but, hey, one's evil, the other's good, and the inevitable happens. Westlake and Byrnne retreat and summon The Chosen One, who predictably arrives with an attitude.

The unavoidable pairing of two of Sam Raimi's seminal creations has great potential, which isn't quite realized in this first issue. Weighed down by too much exposition, the story is slow to start, and readers only get a brief glimpse of what promises to be an intriguing, genius-vs.-dunderhead relationship between Ash and Westlake. The Ash team-ups are stretching as thin as synthetic skin. (Who's next, the Toxic Avenger?) Fortunately, James Fry's art, which uses darkness effectively yet lets color and spot lighting do their thing, is an improvement over the art in most previous *Army of Darkness* comics.

www.dynamiteenterainment.com

Please Release

Top Shelf Productions

$5, b/w, 40 pgs., available now

Writer and artist: Nate Powell

reviewed by **Michael Tierney** ★★½

As a self-publisher since 1977 and as a retailer since 1982, I've always encouraged customers who dreamed of creating comics to take the opportunity to place their work on my store shelves. Usually, those who get that far realize "this is a lot of work" and are never seen again.

Nathan Powell is the exception. His self-published efforts developed a growing fan base and went through multiple printings. He further honed his craft by attending the School of Visual Arts in New York City.

Top Shelf's release of Nate's latest work, *Please Release*, is the next step in this young creator's professional evolution. Dealing with (as Nate put it) "stories about delusion and distraction, stories lifted from the orbits of my life," *Please Release* is another non-sequential installment about the angst of youth and the experiment of life, all graphically illustrated in untarnished black and white — with the flair of an artist who has retained his freedom of expression.

He tells the stories he wants to, the way he wants to, with pure expression. Good job.

www.topshelfcomix.com

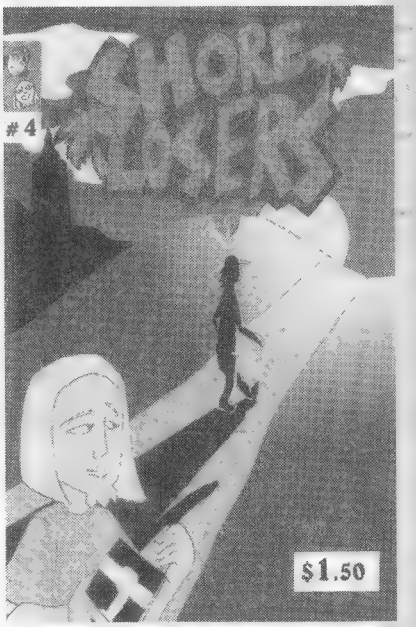
Shore Losers #4

Caprioni Press

$1.50, b/w, 24 pgs., available now

Writer: Jack Caprioni; Artists: Matt Magill, Caprioni

reviewed by **Tony DiGerolamo** ★★★½



Shore Losers is about two guys that live near the Jersey Shore. They try to pick up chicks and fail miserably. It's brilliant. Our two main characters are average schlubs that spend all their time judging women from afar, but are clearly no prizes themselves. Central Jersey denizens will especially get a kick out of the real locations used in the comic. (Red Bank, East Rutherford, and Point Pleasant represent!) Matt Magill's art is still a little rough, but it's exactly good enough for the story. He understands the comic premise of heightening a bit until you push it off the cliff. No matter where the Shore Losers go, they are constantly upstaged.

The production values are still low, but that can easily be fixed with more money. Anyone that puts out a comic this cheap and this good deserves sales. Best of all, the story is complete in one issue. For anyone that's ever spent a pointless evening driving around with your buddies, you will totally relate. Buy this. You'll thank me.

shorelosers@yahoo.com

BOUND For Glory

TRADE PAPERBACK AND GRAPHIC NOVEL REVIEWS

Popeye Vol. 1
Fantagraphics

$29.95, color and b/w, 184 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: E.C. Segar
reviewed by **Maggie Thompson** ★★★★

PICK OF THE MONTH TPB

Subtitled, "I Yam What I Yam!" this volume kicks off reprints of Elzie Segar's *Thimble Theatre* strip beginning with the story that introduced the character of Popeye to the world. With an introduction by Jules Feiffer and a foreword by Bill Blackbeard (who, by the way, introduced most of the comics fan world to the strip decades ago), the book reintroduces a character and world that many people think they already know — but don't. The strip had begun almost a decade earlier, but the turning-point story began at the opening of this book, when Uncle Lubry visits from Africa and brings the Whiffle Hen to the Oyl family (Sept. 10, 1928). She's a "luck hen" so valuable that villains try to steal her, and the Oyls decide to sail to a gambling resort to "win some big money." But they need a crew. Enter (Jan. 17, 1929) a certain sailor. He changed the focus of Segar's work and made it a classic worthy of the gorgeous presentation it receives here.

The diecut front cover sets off a wonderful beginning for an ongoing collection of this pioneering strip. But its nature as one of the first superhero comics won't be as important to today's readers as its delicious entertainment value will be. Readers will be quickly entranced by the hilarity and concepts of Popeye's earliest days. And those who enjoyed the Fleischer cartoons that began in 1933 will be startled to find how much funnier their source material was.

www.fantagraphics.com
ISBN 1-56097-779-7

Eberron: Eye of the Wolf
Devil's Due Publishing
$4.95, color, 48 pgs., available now
Writer: Keith Baker; Artist: Chris Lie
reviewed by **Ray Sidman** ★★½

Fantasy literature — especially that based on a role-playing-game setting — is often epic in nature. Portraying that sort of fantasy tale in comics is all the more difficult, because 48 pages of comics can tell far less story than 48 text pages. So the challenge is to introduce the necessary elements of the fantasy setting and get everything together in one coherent story. Now make that comic book a one-shot and you've got a real task.

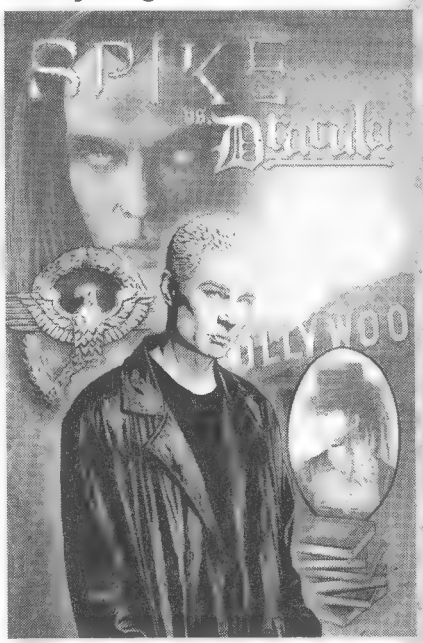
Such is the case for writer Keith Baker and artist Chris Lie. The very nature of the beast makes it impossible — in my opinion — to put together a four-star book. Fantasy RPGs-turned-comics pretty much require a mini-series, at the very least.

But Baker and Lie have done an admirable job. Eberron: Eye of the Wolf is entertaining, easy on the eye, and — most important and difficult to achieve for this genre — cohesive enough to follow.

The final panel offers the text, "The End — For Now!" That's a good idea, actually. If Baker can write a fantasy one-shot as solid as this one, it might behoove DDP to give the guy a mini-series or even an ongoing fantasy title.

www.devilsdue.net

Spike vs. Dracula
IDW Publishing
$19.99, color, 152 pgs., available now
Writer: Peter David; Artists: Joe Corroney, et al.
reviewed by **Kurt Anthony Krug** ★★★½



Remember on television's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* when Spike said he and Dracula were old rivals? Well, Peter David does an excellent job of showing that in this collection that reprints the five-issue series. Not only does he reveal what started that rivalry, he deftly ties that into the storyline in which Angelus gets his soul back in the late 19th century.

Each chapter takes place during a different era, from the roaring '20s to the McCarthy-era of the '50s to the final season of Angel in the early 21st century, when Spike was a ghost. One installment has Spike joining forces with B-movie king Ed Wood to save Bela Lugosi from the real Dracula, who's mad at the way he's portrayed on stage.

David has the characterizations of the actors down pat. He also provides many laugh-out-loud moments that leave the reader in stitches up to the very end.

www.idwpublishing.com
ISBN: 1-60010-012-0

Seven Sons
AiT/PlanetLar
$12.95, b/w, 120 pgs., available now
Writers and artists: Alexander Grecian, Riley Rossmo
reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz** ★★★½

Remember the story *The Five Chinese Brothers*, in which identical brothers with awesome powers defeat an unfair death sentence? Apparently, the tale predates Claire Huchet Bishop and Kurt Wiese's classic 1938 children's book by decades and exists in many forms. In this telling, there are seven brothers and the action has been relocated to the Old West, but it is in many ways reminiscent of the childhood favorite. (The climax, however, is far more dramatic than in the kiddie version.)

That the action occurs in America suggests that the brothers may not be as identical as we usually think. The inability of the mob to tell them apart may be a racist flaw of the persecutors. In either case, it's food for thought.

A fascinating appendix details the history of the story, from its roots in The Brothers Grimm to modern pop-culture references.

Familiarity with The Five Chinese Brothers is no prerequisite to understanding or enjoying Seven Sons. But those who fondly recall that book from their youth should pick up this latest telling for the depth and contrast it will provide.

www.ait-planetlar.com
ISBN: 1-932051-46-5

Untold Tales of the New Universe
Marvel
$15.99, color, 128 pgs., available now
Writers: Peter David, Jeff Parker, et al.; Artists: M.D. Bright, Marshall Rogers, et al.
reviewed by **Kurt Anthony Krug** ★

In 1986, Jim Shooter created The New Universe, a more "realistic" take on superheroes that had nothing to do with the mainstream Marvel universe. However, The New Universe was plagued with problems from the start, especially budget cuts. Creative teams changed every issue (except Paul Ryan and the late Mark Gruenwald on *D.P.7*), giving then-newcomers Peter David, Mark Bagley, Fabian Nicieza, Todd McFarlane, *et al.*, part of their start. Half the New Universe titles were axed, while Justice and Star Brand's origins were dramatically changed midway through, because their backstories originally had extraterrestrial ties, which was too unrealistic for the New Universe.

Some titles were poor, but such others as *D.P.7*, *Psi-Force* (Nicieza's work), and *Justice* (David's work), were excellent. The New Universe ended in 1989. In 1993, many characters showed up in Gruenwald's *Quasar*, while Justice appeared in David's *Spider-Man 2099*. Here endeth the history lesson.

In 2006, to celebrate The New Universe's 20th anniversary, Marvel published new stories set between issues of each New Universe series from the 1980s. The characters haven't moved forward at all. That's a shame, because there's so much potential. The Star Brand story features an alien judging Ken Connell's worthiness for the Star Brand power, contradicting the revised origin.

With the exception of David, none of the original creators returned. David's Justice story is the best of the bunch. The Spitfire story is OK (due to Rogers' art); the D.P.7 story is fair and stays true to Gruenwald and Ryan; but I want to see them now. What a wasted opportunity.

www.marvel.com
ISBN: 0-78512-185-4

Lucifer's Garden of Verses Vol. 4
NBM/ComicsLit
$15.95, b/w, 75 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: Lance Tooks
reviewed by **Ray Sidman** ★★½

Lance Tooks concludes his *Lucifer's Garden* quartet, with this volume, as were the first three volumes, a hardbound book very reasonably priced. The story: about a journalist searching for a number of things (meaning in her life, true love, *etc.*) encountering a kindred spirit one stormy evening in a mysterious bar. Thus the end begins …

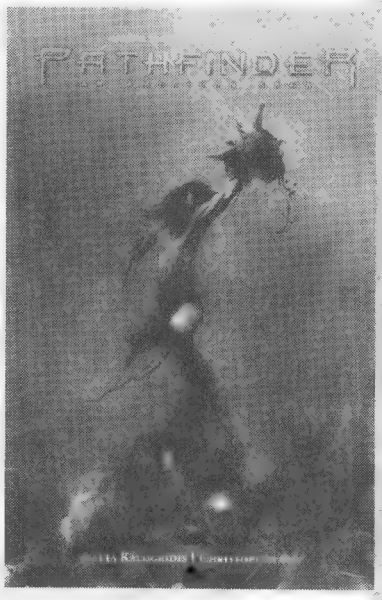
Tooks' writing will turn off some readers because of the large amount of text throughout the book. Nonetheless, his writing is intelligent and challenges the reader to think, whether he agrees with the ideas or not.

Tooks' artistic talent works best in backgrounds. He drops in details, some clearly meant to be read — such as the T-shirt with the logo "Risk Your Comfort" — while others are more subtle, daring the reader to pay attention.

The problem is that, as with other volumes read separately, this story seems to be missing a key connection that's hard to put a finger on. Perhaps it would be best to collect all four *Lucifer's Gardens* into a collected book, and then this work could be more fully appreciated.

www.nbmpublishing.com
ISBN: 1-56163-469-7

Pathfinder
Dark Horse
$19.95, color, 150 pgs., available now
Writer: Laeta Kalogridis; Artist: Christopher Shy
reviewed by **Tim Lasiuta** ★★★



Ghost is an abandoned child left to die in the skeleton of a grounded Viking ship, with shackled natives where no Viking should tread, 500 years before Columbus set foot in the Americas. .

Ghost's Viking ancestry remains in the background, while his native upbringing creates new loyalties. When a surprise Viking attack comes, it forces Ghost to betray his people while forging his new identity in the midst of battle.

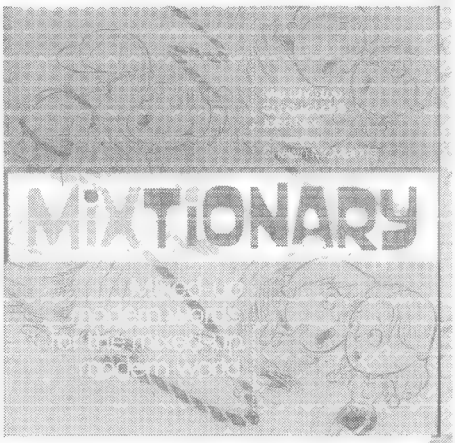
With the *Pathfinder* film scheduled for January release, this amazing story is transformed into comics form. Kalogridis and Shy have created an engrossing tapestry in which the dance of Ghost, Nuane, The Pathfinder, and Viking invaders looms out of darkness and into legend.

The art by Shy is marvelous. The arboreal settings and the stirring images of the native people are skillfully rendered. He excels in the fantastic, and every now and then you can see a hint of Frazetta and Boris.

Even if you don't see the movie, buy the book. It's stunning.

www.darkhorse.com
ISBN: 1-59307-671-1

Mixtionary
IDW Publishing
$9.99, color and b/w, 106 pgs., available now
Writers and artists: Various
reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz** ★★



This dictionary of "mixed-up modern words for the mixed-up modern world" is disappointing, neither as clever nor as cutting-edge as one might hope.

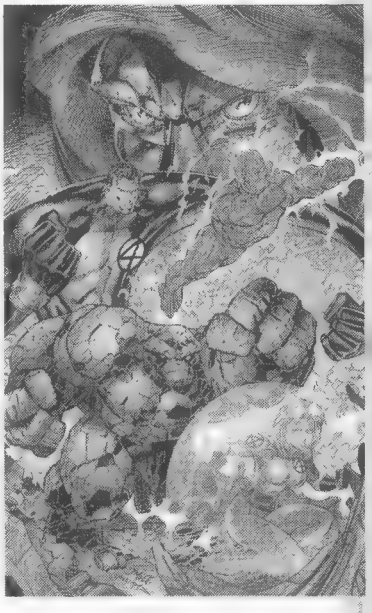
Much of it deals with relationships and, despite the fact that three of the four creators are male, the tone skews heavily to the female point of view. Moreover, many of the terms don't require mixing. A working weekend is a "workend"? All right. But we could have cobbled together that "ex" plus "pose" equals "ex-pose."

The art is fun. Cartoony characters with tiny bodies and giant heads demonstrate the entries, although the pictures rarely add anything to the definition that's not already in the text.

The average *CBG* reader may chuckle knowingly at a few entries, such as "mantiques" (a man's prized possession, which his wife would gladly trash — the illustration shows comics and action figures) or "bidiot" (if you regularly buy comics via online auctions, you may be one), but there's way too much about shoes in here. Readers of *Shoe Buyer's Guide* might better appreciate "shoeoff," "shoepede," "shoepreme," *etc.*

www.idwpublishing.com
ISBN: 160010032-5

Heroes Reborn: Fantastic Four
Marvel
$29.99, color, 336 pgs., available now
Writers: Brandon Choi, Jim Lee; Artists: Lee, Ron Lim
reviewed by **Kurt Anthony Krug** ★★★½



I was so jazzed in 1996, when I heard Jim Lee was taking over The FF, I knew the art would be phenomenal and had confidence Lee would fix all the continuity flaws (e.g., Alicia was really a Skrull). Then, I heard The FF would be re-imagined and I refused to read it. A friend told me that Lee treated The FF with respect and it was the best of the "Heroes Reborn" titles.

Well, 10 years later, my friend was right — and Lee's work still holds up. In fact, Lee says in his introduction that he didn't need to reinvent the wheel with The FF. He made The FF cool again and gave their fateful rocket-flight a modern — and believable — spin. He draws a great FF, Silver Surfer, Namor, and Captain America (dorky eagle on his forehead and all) and an evil-looking Doctor Doom. Lee also has a gift at drawing cool technology, just like FF co-creator Jack Kirby — check out the Fantasticar.

Furthermore, you can tell that some aspects of Lee's FF made it into the 2005 movie. A cool take on Marvel's first family, this trade reprints *Fantastic Four* Vol. 2 #1-12.

www.marvel.com
ISBN: 0-78512-336-9

Valley of the Worm: Weird Works of Robert E. Howard Vol. 5
Wildside Press
$35, 212 pgs., available now
Writer: Robert E. Howard; Editor: John Betancourt
reviewed by **Tim Lasiuta** ★★★½

Volume 5 includes classic Robert E. Howard stories. "Black Colossus," "The Man on the Ground," "The Slithering Shadows," "The Pool of the Black One," "Rogues in the House," "The Valley of the Worm," and the excellent "Gods of the North" are only a few of the ground-breaking tales. "Rogues" is incredible. "Gods of the North" is masterful. And the other tales will grip the reader's heart, holding him or her at swordpoint, and pulling that reader along every barbarian step.

There's racism, sexism, and dated attitudes here, woven into these pulp stories of the 1930s; retaining those retains the world that Howard created: a world that has, in turn, created generations of fans. These are the original texts preserved for new readers.

John Betancourt has released a compendium of which Conan fans may have read a portion, but this is a great hardcover compilation in with a Stephen Fabian cover that reflects the barbarian triumphant.

www.wildsidepress.com
ISBN 0-8095-1135-5

Children of the Grave
IDW Publishing
$14.99, b/w, 120 pgs., available now
Writer: Tom Waltz; Artist: Casey Maloney
reviewed by **Ray Sidman** ★★★

IDW has collected the four-issue 2005 mini-series from Shooting Star Comics in this trade paperback, and it's a welcome addition to the publisher's catalog. Tom Waltz and Casey Maloney's story about the hell and hope of a war is powerful at times and never less than thought-provoking.

The story follows a group of soldiers who investigate a mass murder of children by the evil Col. Akbar Assan. As the soldiers struggle to survive and bring justice to Assan, the ghosts of the murdered children become involved in a quest for vengeance.

This "director's cut" includes newly remastered (aka grayscaled) art, as well as a guest-artist pin-up gallery, an additional eight-page story by Waltz and Maloney, and more.

Fans of war fiction or action comics will appreciate the depth of the story. The characters aren't always dynamic, but the combination of characters with the horrific situation and their struggles with their beliefs and the realities of war make this a tale worth reading. Waltz and Maloney have created an engaging, enthralling story.

www.idwpublishing.com
ISBN: 1-93323993-X

Stormfield Vol. 1
Cartoon Conquest Publishing
$3.95, b/w, 40 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: Wes Alexander
reviewed by **Brett Weiss** ★★★

Stormfield is a comic strip about a mischievous prankster named Alex. He has a fertile imagination, a healthy regard for the opposite sex, and an even healthier disregard for school. His turned-up nose, bushy hair, and eager expression belie his cynical nature, which once caused him to spend the entire weekend "eating pudding and playing videogames" instead of studying for a non-essential book report. In short, Alex is a believable modern kid, but with the necessary exaggerations to make his adventures worth reading about.

Alex isn't as likable or as sympathetic as Charlie Brown, Calvin, Jason Fox, or even Bart Simpson, but he does bring laughter, especially when he's up to no good. The strip he stars in has a clean, refined look that doesn't skimp on detail when the content calls for it. Comics characters making Dagwood sandwiches stopped being funny a long, long time ago (Alex makes two here), but this is a small gripe about an otherwise fine reprint collection.

strmfld@yahoo.com

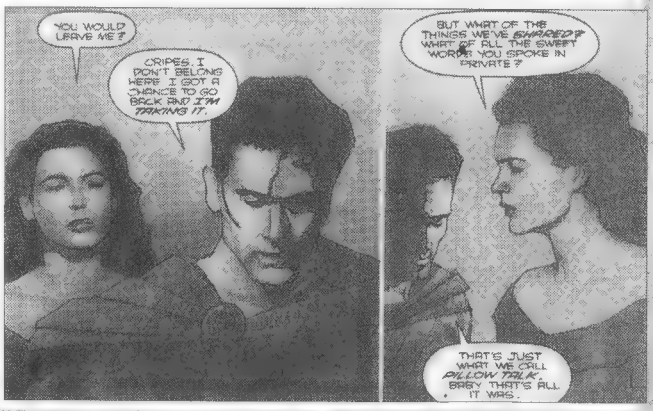
Army of Darkness Movie Adaptation
Dynamite Entertainment
$14.99, color, 96 pgs., available now
Writers: Sam Raimi, Ivan Raimi; Artist: John Bolton
reviewed by **Ray Sidman** ★★★

The eBay market's going to feel this one. Now that Dynamite has released a new collected trade paperback of the *Army of Darkness* three-issue mini-series originally published by Dark Horse, fans can get their fix in ways other than bidding for back issues online.

The cult status of the movie — and, to a slightly lesser degree, the mini-series — speaks for itself. However, since this is a review, I guess I too have to speak for it.

$15 is an appropriate sum to pay for this adaptation. One of the many factors going for it is that comics geek and director Sam Raimi and his brother Ivan wrote the script for the adaptation. How many other comic-book adaptations have been written by the film's director? Also, John Bolton's art is both beautiful and perfect for the job: hard to imagine anyone else handling this task, balancing the film's humor, darkness, and oddball mindset.

The only complaint is that the graininess that was inherent in the original art is slightly amplified in this new edition. However, it's not annoying enough to detract from the appeal of this release.



www.dynamiteenterainment.com
ISBN: 1-933305-17-7

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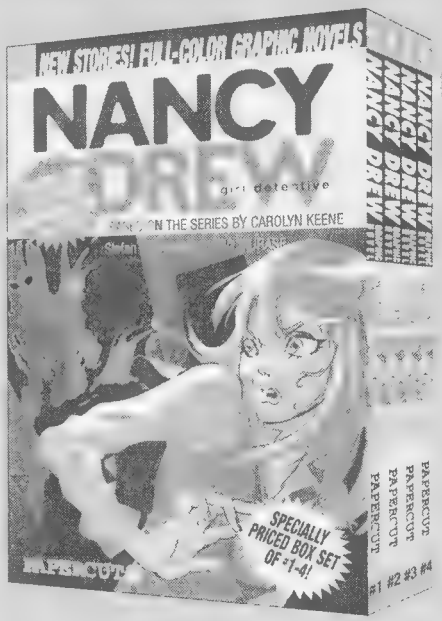

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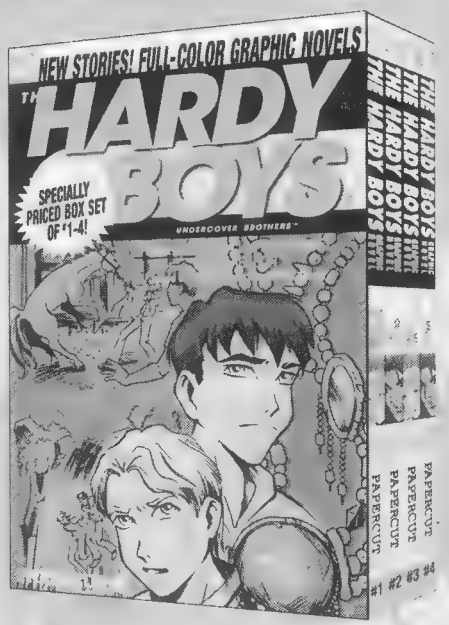

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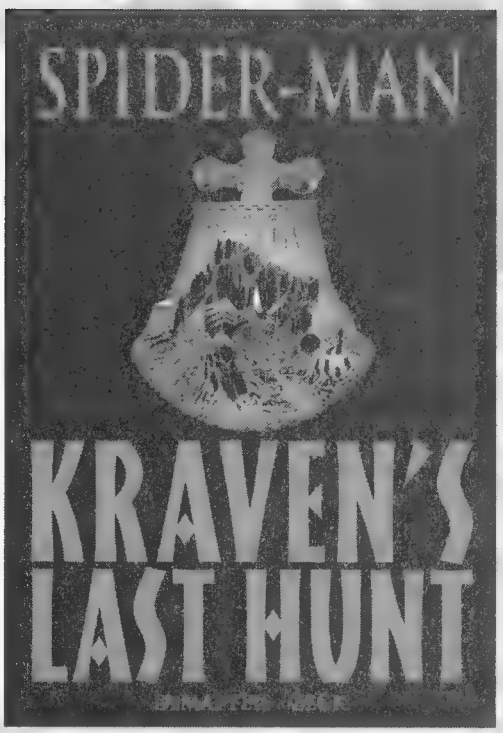
Spider-Man: Kraven's Last Hunt

Marvel

$19.99, color, 168 pgs., available now
Writer: J.M. DeMatteis; Artists: Mike Zeck, Bob McLeod
reviewed by **Kurt Anthony Krug** ★★★½



It's been almost 20 years since this story was first published and it still holds up after all this time, now collected in this handsome hardcover format. This is one of the best Spider-Man stories in the 44-year history of the character — if not the best.

Kraven the Hunter completes the ultimate hunt as he shoots Spider-Man and buries him alive. He dons a Spidey costume and besmirches his enemy's name by killing criminals and beating Vermin to a pulp. Spidey breaks free after two weeks and goes after Kraven, who refuses to fight back. After 19 years, the ending still works.

I believe this is the best story J.M. DeMatteis has ever written by far. Mike Zeck and Bob McLeod make it work with their incredible artistry. DeMatteis puts Spider-Man in a moody, grim, and gritty tale without turning the lead character grim and gritty. He captures the demented voices of Kraven and Vermin perfectly, as well as the traumatized voices of Spidey and Mary Jane. This is Spider-Man at his finest.

www.marvel.com
ISBN: 0-78512-330-X

Kickback

Dark Horse

$12.95, color, 96 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: David Lloyd
reviewed by **Tim Lasiuta** ★★★½

The cover blurb describes *Kickback* as "a crime-noir thriller." And that's right. This is graphic-novel noir that gets dirty. It gets mean. It deals with corruption in the streets, corruption in the police force, and the expectations of a father of his son. And the hard way redemption comes to a family.

Lloyd has created a tale of dopers, the murder of a trafficker named Zed, and the dreams of a cop named Joe that take him across a catwalk and into a gang war between the cops and those who bribe them. He packs in all the elements of such great radio dramas as *Suspense, The Shadow, The Black Museum,* and *Box 13*. His art captures the dark that rots the city and threatens to tear a family apart.

This is a book for those who love noir — both art and story combined in a rare way that compels continued reading. All that's missing is the soundtrack "Who knows what evil lurks ..." You know the rest; now buy the book.

www.darkhorse.com
ISBN: 1-59307-659-2

Boneyard Vol. 5

NBM

$9.95, b/w, 112 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: Richard Moore
reviewed by **Ray Sidman** ★★★

This latest volume collecting Richard Moore's wonderful and ever-underappreciated series *Boneyard* finds the denizens of the local cemetery facing down the mind-controlling (and did I mention nefarious?) Pumpkinhead.

Moore's humor and trademark art shines through, as usual, and the story continues the standard set by earlier volumes in the series. Both the art and the writing will appeal to adolescents and adults alike.

As a bonus, included are a handful of one-page shorts meant as a segue between the arc from volume four and the one in this volume. Why? You see ...

The volume also corrects a slight publisher boo-boo from volume four: the last issue of that arc wasn't included, so it appears at the beginning of this one. (Fear not, NBM. With such an excellent series as this, all is forgiven.)

Fans of the series who have been reading via these collections must buy this volume. Fans who collect every issue must buy this volume and keep supporting Moore's fantastic series. Those who have yet to indulge in the joy that is Boneyard should buy all five volumes (and reread them many times).

www.nbmpublishing.com
ISBN: 1-56163-479-4

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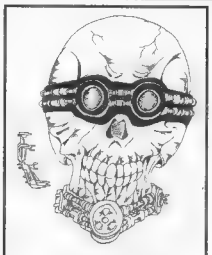

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Fallen Angel: To Serve in Heaven
IDW Publishing

$19.99, color, 128 pgs., available now
Writer: Peter David; Artist: J.K. Woodward
reviewed by **Ray Sidman** ★★★½

For those who haven't heard: Read Peter David's *Fallen Angel*. IDW picked up the title after DC discontinued it last year. The series had been good at DC, and it's a notch above that at IDW. David has continued the story in a refreshing, creative way. This is the first collection of the ongoing IDW series, containing the inaugural story arc published in #1-5.

The story of a (um, duh) fallen angel and her life in the evil and corroded city of Bette Noir at the very least entertains — and at its best utterly captures the imagination, making for a page-turner.

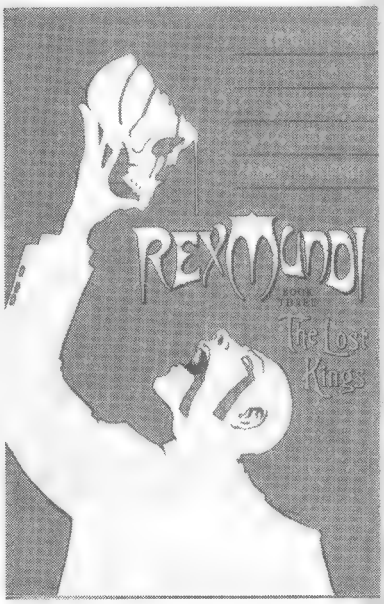
And J.K. Woodward's paints wow. The story by itself would warrant a great grade, but the art is equal to David's writing talent. Woodward may not yet be a well-known name in the industry, but his work on this series proves he should be.

For those who like a cerebral, philosophical bent to their comic-book reading: Give *Fallen Angel* a try. Then see if you don't find yourself catching up on all other issues as they come out.

www.idwpublishing.com
ISBN: 1-93323-977-8

Rex Mundi Book 3: The Lost Kings
Dark Horse

$16.95, color, 176 pgs., available now
Writer: Arvid Nelson; Artists: Eric J., Jim Di Bartolo, et al.
reviewed by **Tim Lasiuta** ★★★½



The world of *Rex Mundi* is entrancing. Arvid Nelson and his team have woven in compelling fashion a storyline combining mystery, murder, the Merovingian Dynasty, the Gnostic Gospels, and the occult.

The Lost Kings follows Dr. Julien Sauniere, the Duke of Lorraine, Genevieve Tournon, the Marquis of Navarre, and a mysterious chain of discoveries that lead Sauniere to the catacombs. Knights Templar, The Gospel of Judas, and theological issues that threaten to rock the faith of the church point to the ascension and resurrection of the Duke of Lorraine as king. But first, political climates and decisions must be made that will lead to war at great cost.

The Lost Kings is good literature, not merely a good comic book. It draws on the great traditions of storytelling and amazing art and makes The Da Vinci Code look like a kids' book.

Rex Mundi translates to "king of the world." In the comic-book world, as far as I'm concerned, it is *Rex Biblio* ("king of books").

www.darkhorse.com
ISBN: 1-59307-651-7

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Vanguard Productions

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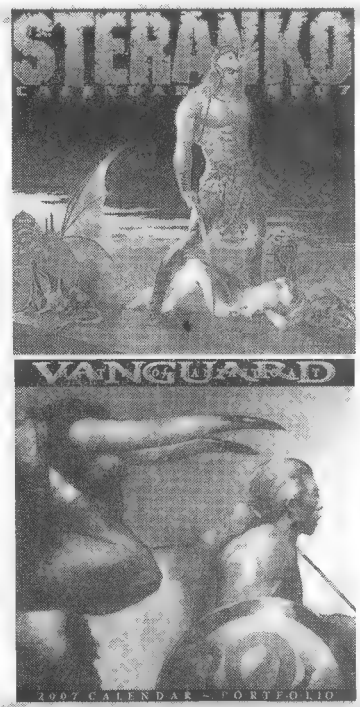
Artists: Various
reviewed by **Ray Sidman** ★★★½



Geek out on a daily (or at least monthly) basis, comic-book lovers. Vanguard Productions has released a trio of wall calendars celebrating illustration legends of the industry. One features the art of Jim Steranko, another the art of Neal Adams, and the third highlights a different artist each month. The art, perhaps little surprise, is beautiful.

Masters of Fantastic Art is the best of the trio. Next to the featured image are a few paragraphs about the artist. Besides major holidays, the date section also lists luminaries' birthdays from the comics fold (such as John Romita and Al Hirshfeld) to other fields (such as Jack Kerouac and Jimi Hendrix).

The Steranko calendar also has nice extras. Each month includes a short essay about the artist and his work. However, while major holidays are listed, the birthdays found in the Masters calendar are absent.

The Adams calendar, of course, also has wonderful art. Unfortunately, it has neither essays nor extra birthdays — just the major holidays.

Nonetheless, all three calendars are printed on thick, glossy stock and offer vibrantly colored images, making these worthy of hanging on any wall.

www.creativemix.com/vanguard/
ISBNs: 1-887591-98-2 (Neal Adams)
1-887591-97-4 (Jim Steranko)
1-887591-99-0 (Masters)

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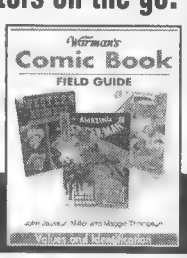

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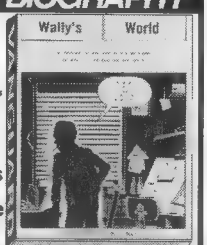

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Shinto and sexual manga influences

From religion to relationships

by **BILL AGUIAR**

This month, I have no brilliant ideas, so this column will be a mixed bag, as I touch on a bunch of topics that happened to come up.

Last month, I talked about Super Robots, how in manga physics tend to be optional, and how the robots are often called gods. Even powerful villains in otherwise low-powered fantasy titles often say that they will become gods. I suspect that this comes from the differences between our myths and religions and Japanese Shinto, which underpins Japanese culture and manga. Shinto can be thought of as an animist tradition, where objects and people can be thought of as *kami*, the term for spirits and gods. *Kami* can represent specific items, a class of items, or even the *concept* of items. For instance, you can have a *kami* of a particular tree, of a particular forest, or even of all trees. Confusing? There's more. *Kami* can also be the deceased, which injects aspects of ancestor worship into Shinto. A particular *kami* can have a home in a particular shrine — or several shrines. The festivals that always seem to be going on in manga can be national holidays or local events linked to a particular shrine or *kami*.

But, while *kami* can be thought of as gods, this, too, is different from the American concept — for, while some *kami* are more powerful, even the ones responsible for the creation of the universe do not "rule over" the others. *Kami* have to work together in order to manage the spirit and material world with no prime mover that commands them all. And, yes, a cooperative culture has a cooperative spirit world, which raises the question of which came first — although I suspect they evolved concurrently, reinforcing each other.

So there are obvious differences between Shinto and both Judeo-Christian beliefs and European folklore that are featured in U.S. comics, such as the Norse mythology that Marvel has mined so extensively. Those differences serve as a filter when Japanese creators include our beliefs in their own work. Shinto shrines are not formally connected to each other in a strict hierarchy, though some are more respected and represent more universally acknowledged *kami*. Shrines are run like a family business, and shrine maidens are important in some rituals — but being one is not a lifelong vocation, as being a nun is, and shrine priests have their own families to help care for the shrine. Using that filter to consider Catholic priests and nuns (the most highly ritualized of the Christian traditions and, thus, superficially similar to Shinto), you end up with the oddly skewed portrayal of Catholicism

that sometimes turns up in manga.

Shinto belief also finds its way into action titles, since, just as U.S. creators include exorcisms, similar rituals turn up in manga. The most common device that is used in manga is the use of paper. Folded paper with religious symbols and/or *kami* names are used in Shinto ceremonies as part of the purification process. Purification and cleanliness, both physically and spiritually, are major components in Shinto belief, rather than good and evil. You can neutralize what a Westerner would see as an evil demon by cleansing it. This leads to one of the major differences in story construction: the lack of "true" evil. The moral ambiguity that exists in much of manga is a side effect of that, because there are right and wrong actions, acting from pure or impure thoughts, but these are all correctable. They can be fixed, overcome, and brought back into harmony, whereas in our traditions evil is an essential state of being to be conquered.

Please realize that these opinions are built from my own readings of manga and Shinto beliefs (especially from *Shinto: The Kami Way* by Sokyo Ono) and any errors or misportrayals are my own.

Shinto is just one of the cultural sources that inform manga, and the knowledge to decode those sources for the most part does not exist in the world of comics — but, rather, in the world of academia. Still, there are works that are not too immersed in academia-speak and are intelligible to the layman.

The most rigorous that I know among the academic studies of manga is Sharon Kinsella's *Adult Manga*, though at several of this year's shows I saw signs that academic publishers have competing titles in the works. *Adult Manga* is adult, not in the sense of that separate catalog for Diamond Comic Distributors that tells the retailers what to keep out of the hands of minors, but in the sense of maturity and grown-up tastes. The breadth of the material and genres in the Japanese market still astonishes people. I guess it is mostly because it is out there, easily available in the same venues as the kid-oriented titles.

While the same genres are also available in America, they can only be found in the direct market's comics specialty stores, often in the back, away from the super-hero comics. You need to actually go into the store to find them, rather than just peek through the front window.

There are interesting bits in *Adult Manga* about the history of manga, including the fact that in its beginning it was meant to create material for a rental market. Yes, imagine a world in which Blockbuster rents comics. Considering how much of a beating Blockbuster has been taking from NetFlix, it might not be a bad idea. *Adult Manga* talks a little bit about the mechanics of publishing and the relationships between editors and creators, which is interesting in that it is one of the few areas in which there seems to be a fundamental class clash.

Yes, Japan has its class conflicts, just like other countries. In Japan, it is defined by which school you graduated from (or even if you graduated at all), where the editors in most cases graduate from better universities and artists haven't gone to college (or went to less-prestigious schools). The editors tend to shape the story — which may explain why so many manga stories repeat the same tropes: The editors all know them and they don't have the time to handle their other tasks to range further afield for story concepts. Meanwhile, creators are more focused on the art, which means it has a wider variety of styles.

The manga magazines have a strong feedback mechanism, so that story arcs that are not appealing can be rapidly changed in response to the readers. One can make an argument that this means the creators are hostage to the readers, which may explain the 100-page fight scenes. If the readers just want to get right to the fight scene, why bother spend time setting up new battles, when you can just continue the old one? It's only when the chapters are collected that the story's neglected plotline becomes apparent.

The major problem with *Adult Manga* is that it was published in 2000, which means that Kinsella probably gathered her research mostly in the late '90s, before the rise of the U.S. manga market. The U.S. manga market was inconsequential and the licensing fees that it garnered were tiny and considered "found money," rather than a real revenue stream. I suspect with the expansion of the U.S. market and the increase of the graphic-novel section's size and selection at most bookstores, there have been substantial changes in the organization and nature of the manga industry, especially with respect to overseas licensing.

There is still a lot of the history and influence on Japanese culture and society that remains relevant, if you can find a copy of *Adult Manga*. Supposedly, the book is getting hard to find, but some of the articles that make up the book are included free at the author's website at *www.kinsellaresearch.com*.

There are other sources, not as interesting in my opinion as *Adult Manga*, but still useful.

Frederick Schodt (a pioneer in books detailing manga history for U.S. readers) has done translation work on several different manga series available from Dark Horse and has written a book for the layman called *Dreamland Japan.* In addition, there have been several attempts to collect anime and manga research on the Web, with a good starting point being *www.animeresearch.com.*

You can talk about academic reasoning as long as you want, but people want to know what's popular. And the *yaoi* explosion is one of those things that make people associated with more traditional comics scratch their heads. *Yaoi* manga is basically about homosexual male relationships. These are not fringe titles, such as American adult comics or alternative titles, but are among the most popular with mainstream sales numbers. Maybe American titles have not sold as well because the creators have thought that the audience was gay men. Nevertheless, the primary audience for *yaoi* is women, which seems to be the default audience for manga, in any case.

The way it has been explained to me (and in those academic works I was just writing about), Japanese society constrains male behavior, so that it is only in *yaoi* that they can act in a romantic way and express their emotions. Most of the time, *yaoi* deals with emotions and relationships, though there is more hardcore stuff available. But such stories are not all that alien to fans of American comics. There are women I know who watch *Smallville* because of the "obvious" lust between Clark and Lex, writing Lana off as a beard, especially in earlier seasons.

As you can imagine, the topic matter tends to give many companies the willies, so, at least in the beginning of the manga boom, the *yaoi* market was left to start-ups and separate imprints. Yaoi Press is one of those startups, and it is just releasing the first collection of *Zesty!* — their *yaoi* webcomic. Zesty is the son of a billionaire land tycoon who has evil plans that Zesty opposes. Aided by Magpie, the organization Zesty founded to oppose his father, Zesty comes up against Prince, a leader of a ninja sect who is planning to join Zesty's father — which makes Zesty sad, because Prince is hot. Zesty has to foil his father's plans, figure out what his father and the clan of ninjas are up to, and see if he can break down Prince's ability to resist his charm.

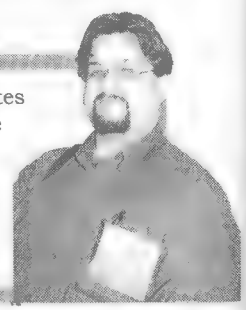
Needless to say, this is a manga that does not take itself seriously. Mostly an action-comedy, the title does have the problem of many webcomics when published: When the individual pages are collected, the story's flow can be jarring and sometimes the plot can seem erratic, probably because it was written a few pages at a time. But the advantage of being a Web title is that you can sample it online before picking up the book. This is a teen-rated title and only gets that rating because of the gay characters. There is some smooching and perhaps some off-panel groping, but nothing else that will cause much trouble for readers or retailers. Since *Zesty!* the webcomic is located on the Yaoi Press website, most of the readers of the much larger Yaoi Press line will be aware of it and searching for it. And the art has been improved with full tones in the published version, so even people who have read the whole story online will look forward to the printed version.

Manga is changing comics, ranging from how the academic world looks at it to what genres are popular and acceptable. At the time of this writing, a major book chain just announced that it's going to create an adult graphic novel section for the more mature titles.

Could that have been imagined even a few years ago?

BILL AGUIAR not only writes this column and others for the gaming industry, he runs the game company The CaBil and schemes how to use his new MA while not sleeping.

Contact Bill at ***CaBil@aol.***



D. Gray Man Vol. 1
Viz
$9.99, b/w, 208 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: Katsura Hoshino
reviewed by **Oliver Chin** ★★½

Old England isn't as jolly as it could be, as demonic "akuma" are on the verge of overtaking humanity and British bobbies won't know what hit them. This is all thanks to the nefarious plans of the Millennium Earl, a phantom who has tempted despondent people for a millennium uses his toxic minions to inhabit their bodies and feed on their souls. Luckily, teenage exorcist Allen Walker is here to save the day.

Empowered by the godly substance of "innocence," Allen transforms his cross-tattooed left hand into an akuma-killer. Along the way, he rescues the policewoman Moa from her possessed brother in-law Marc, who long ago crossed to the other side when his wife died tragically. Allen seeks allies from The Black Order, whose members recognize a potential savior in their midst. But will the Earl nip their resistance in the bud?

Mixing Full Metal Alchemist with Hellsing yields such gray matter. Katsura Hoshino's art is finely detailed. But his script, laden with Judeo-Christian overtones, doesn't keep pace with the action yet.

www.viz.com
ISBN: 1-42150-623-8

Berserk Vol. 11
Dark Horse
$13.95, b/w, 240 pgs., available now
Writer and artist: Kentaro Miura
reviewed by **Oliver Chin** ★★★½

Just when the Band of the Hawk thinks things are looking up, the worst is yet to come. Having successfully rescued their tortured leader Griffith from Midland's prison and exotic assassins, Guts and company are finally home free. However, the deranged King lets loose another mercenary on their heels — the wildman Wyald and his Knights of the Black Dog.

Guts may have met his match in this opponent who survives when his men do not and thrives from the chase to the point of revealing his true nature. Transforming into a two-story behemoth, Wyald pushes Guts, Casca, and the crippled Griffith to the brink of death. But is their fate reserved by the winged demon Nosferatu Zodd and the dreaded Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse?

True to form, this series gets even more berserk and pushes the sanity of both its characters and readers. Kentaro Miura continues to one-up himself by serving up fantastically gruesome rounds of combat that exhaust the most diabolical imagination and redefine the bounds of mature manga.

www.darkhorse.com
ISBN: 1-59307-470-0

Boys of Summer Vol. 1
Tokyopop
$9.99, b/w, 200 pgs., available now
Writer: Chuck Austen; Artist: Hiroki Otsuka
reviewed by **Oliver Chin** ★★

America's pastime is either baseball or babe-watching, especially for a horny college freshman like Bud Waterston. He hopes to have the best of both worlds, when he and his pal Manny join a coed dorm at Wilten State University, where girls go wild.

But his eyes may be bigger than his mouth, when on the diamond he bumps into Chrissie, whom he ogled back home on the tennis court. Though he has a fastball, Bud's been thrown a curve by a gal who has assets in more ways than one. Can he and Manny make the team as battery mates, when her dad is the coach and Chrissie the designated catcher?

Another entry in the oxymoronic category of American manga, writer Chuck Austen indulges in laddie-magazine humor and artist Hiroki Otsuka in Hooters-style fan service in a title aimed at adolescent boys who steal peeks at their father's Playboys. In producing a spring-break Mr. Baseball, the creators concoct a crude American-Japanese fantasy where sex-starved boys can literally and figuratively round the bases for the ultimate score.

www.tokyopop.com
ISBN: 1-59816-545-3

Telepathic Wanderers Vol. 1
Tokyopop
$9.99, b/w, 192 pgs., available now
Writer: Yasutaka Tsutsui; Artist: Sayaka Yamazaki
reviewed by **S.A. Bennett** ★★★

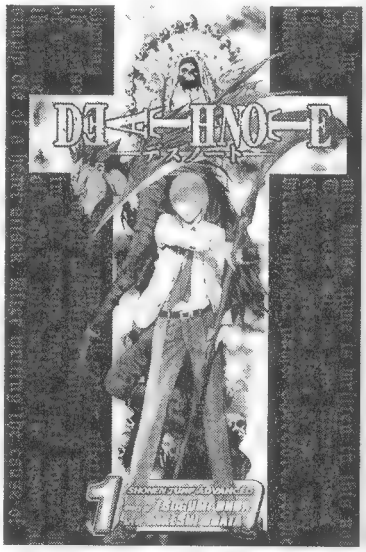
Attractive telepath Nanase returns to her home town and faces a vengeful ex-teacher who blames her for ruining his life. Then, while on a passenger train, she receives a precognitive flash of its being destroyed by a mudslide.

Back-cover copy calls Telepathic Wanderers "a sexy and sophisticated paranormal drama," and it's certainly sophisticated. There's no cabal of psychics bent on world domination or men in black rounding them up in concentration camps (though that is something Nanase fears). She's no super-hero, yet, due to her abilities, is constantly forced to make life-and-death choices for herself and others.

While there's sexually charged material, it's in too degrading a context to be considered in any way "sexy" — showing what life must be like for a telepath to be constantly stripped and assaulted in the minds of passing men. Yet the author (who theoretically is "widely known as Japan's Isaac Asimov"; I'd like to see documentation to back that up) doesn't see humanity as inherently evil, just selfish and weak.

www.tokyopop.com
ISBN: 1-59532-938-2

Death Note Vol. 1
Viz
$7.99, b/w, 200 pgs., available now
Writer: Tsugumi Ohba; Artist: Takeshi Obata
reviewed by **Oliver Chin** ★★½



What happens when a human plays both god and the devil? Ryuk, a "death god," finds out, when he intentionally drops his notebook with which he writes the name of people destined for sudden expiration. When high-school student Light Yagami discovers it, he suddenly can see Ryuk and learn how to write a "death note." Immediately, Light starts offing prisoners on Japan's death row to create a new world order.

However, Interpol and Japan's National Police Agency want to end this vigilantism, and the enigmatic detective "L" challenges the killer. Now both the hunter and the hunted, Light becomes determined to ring up "L" as well by stealing information from his father, the head of the NPA.

Aimless teens surely can identify with Light's obsession with the omnipotence of being both judge and jury. Light is untroubled by both Ryuk's startling visage and the moral ambiguity and biased implementation of the death penalty. Therefore, the manga's amorality hearkens back to Machiavelli's The Prince, but it chooses to be coldly sensationalistic instead of boldly insightful.

www.viz.com
ISBN: 1-4215-0168-6

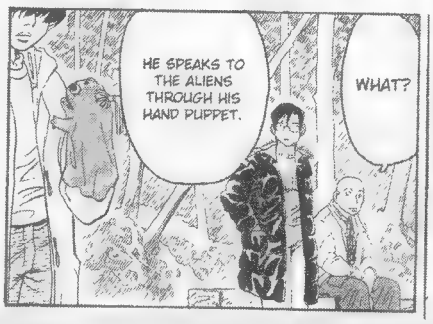
The Kurosagi Corpse Delivery Service Vol. 1
Dark Horse
$10.95, b/w, 216 pgs., available now
Writer: Eiji Otsuka; Artist: Housui Yamazaki
reviewed by **Jack Abramowitz** ★★★½

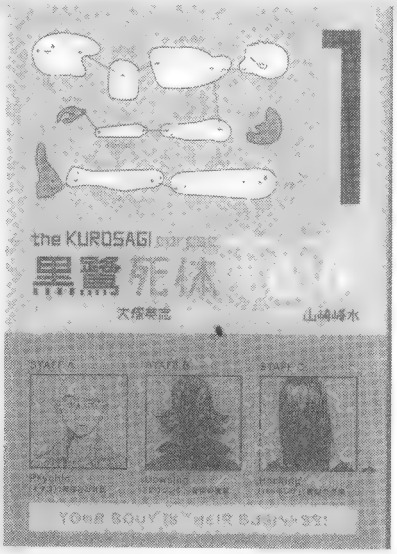
Prepare for a different type of ghost story. The Kurosagi Corpse Delivery Service consists of five washouts from a Buddhist university. They have a variety of unique skills, ranging from psychic (divining the location of corpses, talking to the dead) to practical (such as embalming, not widely practiced in Japan). They pool their talents into a business, taking the dead where they wish to go. The catch? The dead are the ones who have to pay for the service.

In their adventures, they have to reunite young lovers, help a grandmother find a legendary burial field, and stop a serial killer. There's also an enjoyable tale of an actuary. Yes, The Kurosagi Corpse Delivery Service makes insurance fun!

The presence of Kurosagi member Yata is puzzling, since his "skill" involves allegedly channeling aliens through a hand puppet. His inclusion doesn't hurt the story, but it is odd.

An appendix tells more about Japanese sound effects than most would





probably care to know. Those who do care will find themselves in FX heaven.

www.darkhorse.com
ISBN: 1-59307-555-3

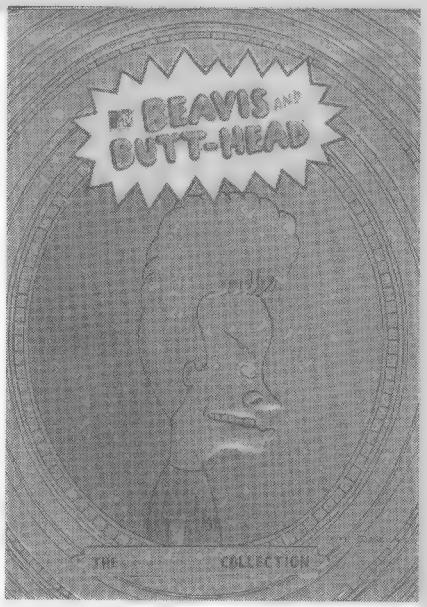
Somewhere between what is known and what is unknown lies ... something else.

Beavis and Butthead: The Mike Judge Collection

Paramount Home Video/MTV Home Video

$129.99, Color, 786 min./10 DVDs, Available now

★★★★



More than 13 hours of Beavis and Butt-Head — can you handle it? (Huh, huh ... I said "hand.") If you can and have $130 to spare, then this set is a wonder to behold. It contains the three volumes of *The Mike Judge Collection* (at three discs each) plus the feature film *Beavis and Butt-Head Do America.*

When the first *Collection* volume came out, Judge said that the consensus was that, of the entire B&B series, one-third was great, one-third was OK, and one-third sucked — and these releases contain the first two-thirds. While I don't remember every single episode, I would have to say that the three volumes succeed in this notion.

The animated idiot lads massacre pop-culture, common sense, and themselves in pretty much every episode — there are exceptions, such as the classic "A Great Day" — and Judge's sensibilities keep the action hilarious and highly entertaining, as long as the viewer can handle the general moronic milieu.

Included are the Christmas and Halloween specials, as well as guest appearances by the boys, and many, many music videos. No doubt there are videos that fans will remember and dub as missing on this set — one of my favorites being Culture Club's "Karma Chameleon" — but this creative element of the show is well represented.

www.paramount.com
ISBN: 1-4157-2623-X

Blackstar: The Complete Series

Ink & Paint (BCI)

$49.98, Color, 286 min. 2 DVDs, Available now

★★★

To make this easy: If you like the *He-Man and the Masters of the Universe* formula, odds are you'll like this show. If not, probably best to avoid it. Mind you, *Blackstar* came first (1981) but never found the success of *He-Man* — best evidenced by the fact that only 13 episodes were produced.

John Blackstar is an astronaut from Earth sucked into a black hole, who ends up on the planet Sagar and quickly becomes a savior for those who cannot defend themselves — aka the Hobbit-like creatures the Trobbits — against the evil Overlord. (Name creativity abounds.)

Probably a good half- to full star of the 3-star grade comes from nostalgia, as I fondly remember watching this show as a child. However, that also is an endorsement, because this cartoon is intended for that age group. No ultra-violence or little bits of double-entendre humor aimed at adults — just good, heroic, fun for the younger crowd.

The extras are interesting but not overly impressive. Die-hard fans will enjoy the trivia section, and most viewers can appreciate the original sketches and other art.

At nearly $50, this is a pricey two-disc set, but, if you've got the money and the nostalgic yen, then this may well be worth it.

www.inkandpaintdvd.com

Mystery Science Theater 3000 Collection Vol. 10

Rhino Home Video

$59.95, Color, 375 min./4 DVDs, available now

★★★

Giant Japanese lizards, swamps, stranglers, and oversized spiders — that's what it's all about. "It" being the latest *MST3K* collection.

It's unlikely any of these four movies — *Godzilla vs. Megalon*, *Swamp Diamonds*, *Teen-Age Strangler*, or *The Giant Spider Invasion* — is considered the best of the best by most *MST3K* fans, but they each have plenty of laughs. The arachno-enhanced cheese is the best of this quartet, despite the cult status of the Godzilla film.

The extras are sweet. During the two shorts, "Is This Love?" and "What to Do on a Date," the Satellite of Love crew causes much gut-busting laughter. Perhaps the best extra on this set — and arguably ever on the *MST3K* sets — is the "MST3K Jukebox," with some 40 songs performed by Crow, Tom Servo, and the gang. The outtakes seen in the extra "MST3K Poopie II" are OK but nothing impressive.

As with every other *MST3K* set in this series, Rhino is a bit too proud, since the $60 tag is too high, though this is an enjoyable set and one requisite for the MST3K aficionado.

www.rhino.com

Little Miss Moppet knew how to celebrate the holiday season

YOW! Christmas with Little Lulu

by CRAIG SHUTT

As many of us know, Lulu was created in 1935 by Marjorie ("Marge") Henderson Buell to star in one-panel gags for the *Saturday Evening Post*, replacing the pantomime panel *Henry*. In keeping with her predecessor's style, Lulu also was mute, relying on sight gags to make her (mostly adult) audience chuckle. She soon became a major licensing star and later gained her own comics series (among many other things) with Western Printing & Lithographing Co.

Little Miss Moppet made her comic-book debut in Dell's *Four Color* #74 (Jun 45), written and drawn by John Stanley, and appeared in nine more *Four Color* issues before starting her own series with #1 (Jan-Feb 48). It took her a year to get into the Christmas spirit but, once she did, starting with *Little Lulu* #18 (Dec 49), she made it a fairly annual celebration well before the Silver Age began and continuing into the mid-1970s.

To be sure, Lulu's Christmas tales tended to be relegated to one story in each issue, typi-

McNabbem's cunning plan to dress as Santa to catch truant kids in #77 worked as well as most of his plans did.

Santa wasn't the jolly old elf we were led to believe, at least when he confronted Little Itch in Lulu's tale for Alvin in #217.

Dear Mr. Silver Age,

I am shocked that so few super-heroes ever celebrated Christmas during the Silver Age! What a missed opportunity to teach readers about the values of the season and celebrate the festive holiday! Was there anyone who kept Christmas well back then?

Rudolph T.R.N.R.
North Pole

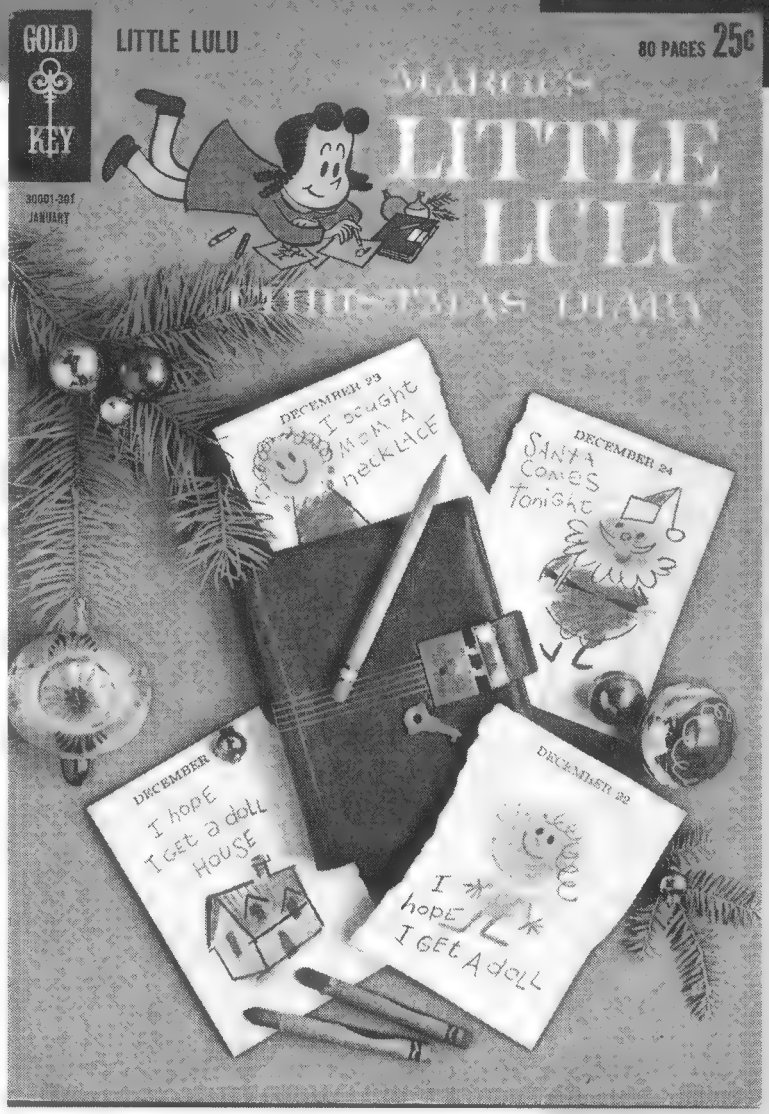
Mr. Silver Age says: It's true that super-heroes were not especially festive back in the day, Rudy. It's hard to say why that was, since Christmas was certainly a big deal to their readers, and tying into that excitement would have given the stories an extra kick. Certainly, the few stories that ran were pretty darn festive and are well remembered. But comics fans back then mostly had to look to other genres to celebrate the holiday season. One of the best at doing it up right was Lulu Moppet, aka Marge's Little Lulu.

cally eight pages out of 52. Even so, many of the remaining stories had winter themes with snowman and such, and there were eight issues with Christmas covers to really highlight the holiday season. There were exceptions to this approach, notably #54 (Dec 52), which featured three Christmas stories, and the next year's #66 (Dec 53), which contained two Christmas tales.

Lulu #127 (Jan 59) regaled readers with *six* Christmas-themed adventures, including two one-page gags and "Lulu's Diry," the text feature. Even with all that holiday festivity, there was still room for a non-Christmas lead story of seven pages. Readers got their money's worth when they bought *Little Lulu.* (There also were a variety of New Year's stories included through the years, which boosted the seasonal selections.)

Lulu's biggest holiday extravaganza came in #166 (Jan 63), with a special "Marge's Little Lulu Christmas Diary," an 80-page giant devoted exclusively to Christmas tales. Some of those were later reprinted in the 32-page #250 (Jan 79), during a period when issues consisted mostly of reprints.

Her Christmas stories focused on a few key aspects of the holiday, but, within those themes, the adventures were creative, varied, and hilarious. As always, they featured the delightful plotting, scripting, and thumbnail layouts of John Stanley and the complementary finished art of Irving Tripp.



Lulu #166 offered an 80-page Christmas extravaganza.

The most frequently recurring theme, of course, was Santa Claus. Big Red seldom showed up in person but he played a major role in a number of the tales with his looming presence (and presents), just as he does for kids today. That presence was so significant that many adults impersonated the jolly old elf, with mayhem often ensuing.

In truth, when Santa *did* show up, he wasn't quite as jolly as the kids had pictured him. In a one-page gag in #30 (Dec 50), Santa came down Tubby's chimney and admired the matching pair of socks that had been hung with care. When Tubby came down the next morning, he discovered that Santa had been *so* impressed that he'd left his own socks and taken Tubby's pair. They were larger, so Tub made out OK, but they were pretty raggedy.

Santa played the bad cop for Little Itch, the witch kid, in #127, but that was inside a story Lulu was telling to Alvin, so it only featured Lulu's version of Santa (or at least the one she wanted to convey to Alvin). In her tale, Lulu explained that Itch was sad because Santa always passed her by. Itch learned (through heavy persuasion) from a poor Little Lulu-looking girl that you had to write Santa a letter to get presents. So Itch did. Unfortunately, she became carried away and wrote a bossy, bragging letter about all the bad things she'd done (kickle, kickle, kickle) and threatened dear old Father Christmas.

Later, she became concerned that her letter wouldn't work

Tubby's teasing of Lulu that he planned to trap Santa Claus led to mayhem he hadn't anticipated in #43.

The feller's power of suggestion led them to believe that Santa would visit their tree, even though it was summer in #86.

(imagine that), so she flew off on Christmas Eve and stole the poor little girl's presents, arriving home to find Santa waiting for her. Admitting that he'd found her letter at least to be honest, he started to give her presents — until he saw she'd stolen some. He forced her to return the other presents, which she did resentfully (you've gotta love Itch), and all was well, more or less.

Lulu's Santa appeared in another Alvin tale in #166, when a Little Lulu-looking Eskimo girl wanted to chat with Santa on Christmas Eve. So she reduced the hole in the top of her igloo to get him stuck. She succeeded — but then she had to deliver all his toys, since he was indisposed. By the time she got back, she was too pooped to palaver.

A poor little Eskimo girl set a trap for Santa that backfired on her in Lulu's tale for Alvin in #166.

The inherent problem in trapping Santa was a lesson the kids would have been wise to learn, because it was a recurring theme. In #43 (Jan 52), for instance, Tubby and the fellers teased Lulu and the girls that they were going to trap Santa and keep all the toys. The boys thought this was a swell prank that would keep the girls worried all night, but, of course, it backfired. Girls in Lulu's world, you see, don't just sit around and fret, they act — which the fellers often seemed to forget about the girls while they were congratulating themselves on another cunning plan that was about to blow up.

Afraid that Tub's scheme would mean they wouldn't get any presents, the girls went to the cops (who weren't overly concerned), and then Lulu staked out Tubby's home, planning to warn Santa. Unfortunately, Tub's father tried to surprise his son by dressing up as ol' Kris Kringle and sneaking into the house. Lulu raised the alarm, mayhem ensued, the cops arrived, and things went downhill from there. After some worry that Santa might have been put off by the melee, things worked out all right.

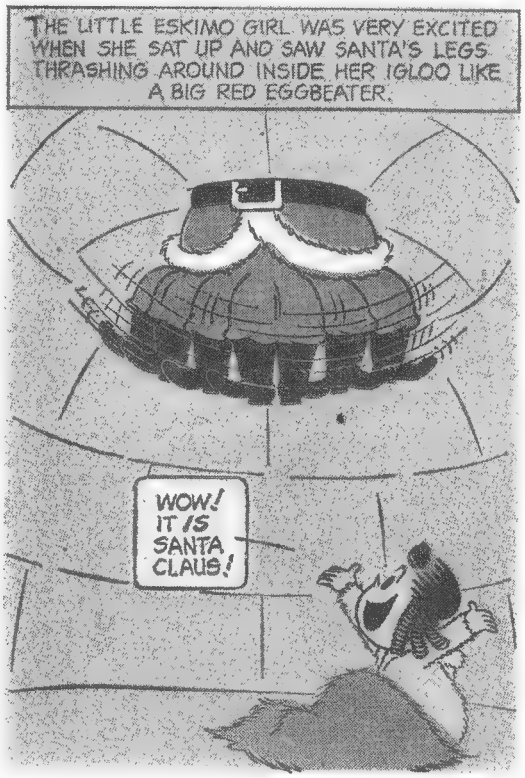
Lulu could give as well as she got when it came to using Santa in schemes. In general, she was generous, kind-hearted, loyal, and just a tad gullible (as Tub's trapping-Santa trick showed). But she also was smart as a whip and capable of vengeance, so you didn't want her to discover that you'd crossed or tricked her (as Tubby and the fellers so, so often did).

That was apparent in the sole summertime Christmas tale, in #86 (Aug 55). The fellers bragged about their secret way of keeping cool, which consisted of putting a Christmas tree in their clubhouse and thinking cool thoughts. Lulu sneaked up and jingled some sleigh bells just to see what would happen. (Something stupid usually did when it involved the fellers.) Sure enough, the fellers thought Santa Claus was stopping by to leave presents. (The fellers were a tad gullible, too.)

An amused Lulu took advantage, making Santa-like noises so the fellers would find ways to entice Père Noel to enter. Ultimately, they made it so easy that Lulu swiped their tree. Worst of all, the fellers couldn't prove Lulu was to blame (but they doubted that Santa was).

There were plenty of other fake Santas running around, too. In #77 (Nov 54), for instance, Mr. McNabbem, the truant officer, became frustrated with his inability to catch any kids playing hooky. He (and the kids he overheard) credited that inability partly to his being so much slower. So McNabbem devised a cunning plan to dress up like jolly old Saint Nick to catch them off guard.

Things became complicated, as they did so many, many times in a Lulu adventure, by sev-



eral events coming together. First, Lulu's homework blew out of her book and over a fence, where a trash picker picked it into his sack. Simultaneously, McNabbem realized he needed a sack to complete his Santa disguise and convinced the trash picker to lend him his. Lulu and McNabbem ran into each other with different agendas, and soon paper was flying everywhere. (***Spoiler warning:*** Lulu got her homework and got away clean, while McNabbem had to pick up the trash.)

That escapade soured McNabbem on Santa schemes for many years, but he was back in the scarlet suit in #216 (Jan 74) — but not of his own volition. Since all the male teachers had been traumatized by their past Santa simulations, the principal blackmailed McNabbem into donning the crimson costume. (A truant officer who never catches a kid playing hooky has to tread softly through the halls of academe.) He wasn't thrilled by this order, figuring he'd fail at his impersonation, just as he'd failed in his career.

He was brought out of his funk by Lulu, who was dressed as an angel for the school play. Mistaking her for the Real Celestial Deal and heeding her words of encouragement, McNabbem wowed the kiddie crowd in an inspirational story that still brings a tear to my eye.

An angelic Lulu helped inspire McNabbem to give it the old Christmas try when his confidence waned in #216.

Keep in mind that, despite McNabbem's fears, the kids knew their school Santa was an imposter and that adults occasionally impersonated their polar pal. That didn't distract them from waiting for Santa's arrival on Christmas Eve. Heck, who wouldn't want to dress up like a kid's favorite person in the whole wide world?

An example played out in #230 (Jan 76), when Lulu revealed to her mom that she *knew* her father impersonated Sinter Claus on Christmas Eve. Rather than be upset by the ruse, Lulu was proud to have a dad who dressed up as Santa. In fact, after she boasted about it to the kids, they all vowed to make their dads play Santa that year.

As a result, there were a lot of Santas roaming the neighborhood come Christmas Eve, including two robbers who tried to break into rich kid Wilbur Von Snobbe's home dressed in Santa disguises. They were stopped by Snobbly the butler, who was dressed in an upgraded, designer scarlet suit. The crooks bolted but they were chased by the rest of the neighborhood St. Nicks, until more than a half-dozen were running around. Fortunately, the kids immediately recognized their dads, leaving the crooks out in the cold.

The kids knew their dads dressed up as Santa, as shown in #230, but it didn't detract from their joy when the real elfin deal arrived.

The line between Santa and impersonations wasn't questioned too closely in Lulu's world, as was shown in a quick three-pager in the *Christmas Diary* issue. In that tale, the sugar plums dancing in Lulu's head were interrupted when she remembered she hadn't put out a snack for Big Red. She surprised her parents in the middle of their decorating (although she was too focused on her goal to pay much attention) and created her snack. Deciding for a change from her usual cookies, she laid out a liverwurst on raisin-bread sandwich, pickles and potato salad.

Later that night, Lulu's sugar plums once

Lulu and Annie were fooled by a street-corner Santa in #66, not a mistake these two wizened Christmas veterans often made.

again were jolted from their jitterbugging by moans from her pop's bedroom. He'd obviously eaten something that wasn't agreeing with him, but Lulu was only upset that she'd been awakened again on Christmas Eve, without giving much thought to what might have caused the indigestion.

There was another type of Santa around town, too — the one who rang the bell and collected donations. In #66 (Dec 53), Lulu and her friend Annie mistook one such Santa for the Real Chubby Deal. As a result, they inadvertently foiled one of Tubby's plots by giving Santa the money they were nearly snookered out of.

However, in the "Christmas Diary" issue, Tubby's 50¢ piece accidentally bounced into a pot used by what he referred to as a "street corner Santa Claus." Granted, this one was too shabby and gaunt to be the real thing, but the notion that Tubby knew the street-corner model was fake and Lulu and Annie didn't was an interesting idea.

Tubby would have retrieved his cash, of course, but the Santa made such a big deal out of such a generous donation and how Tubby would be repaid many times over, that he didn't have the nerve to ask for it back. Later, after much self-pity and a dramatic change of fortune, he returned to let Santa know his prophesy had turned out to be correct.

Playing nearly as large of a role in Lulu's holiday as the big man himself was that other significant symbol of the season, Christmas trees. They were a key factor in a number of stories, an odd quirk, considering the variety of other holiday bits of business available. On the other hand, the anticipation, selection, delivery, and decoration of the tree offered a variety of places where mayhem could — and did — break out.

The feller's summertime Christmas tale in #86, noted earlier, was based on their decorated Christmas tree being such a powerful symbol that it convinced them they were cool despite the heat. The awe inspired by the family Christmas tree was seen even better in a three-page "Christmas Diary" short. It opened with Lulu admiring her decorated tree, shown in a half-page opening panel in all its tinselly wonder. That lasted until Tubby arrived and sneezed, blowing off all the ornaments. (He'd come over to warn Lulu not to visit him,

Lulu's Christmas tree was a thing of beauty, at least until Tubby arrived, in #166.

because he was getting a cold. Such deranged logic was typical of Lulu stories.)

The tree tales began with #30 (Dec 50), in a classic story in which the kids' good nature overcame their spider-sense warning them of evil (which happened frequently, leading to fun adventures). In this case, Tubby went down to the market to pick up the Christmas tree his mother had bought. He was dismayed to see it tied up, which didn't show off its pristine beauty, so Joe the grocer untied it. As Tub dragged it home, however, he ran into Wilbur, who bet Tub his tree was better.

Wilbur convinced Tubby he should let the chauffeur drive it home for him, dragging it slowly behind the car. Except, once Tub was inside, Wilbur told the driver he had to get home quickly and the chauffeur sped off, not realizing (somehow) that he was dragging a spruce. Needless to say, the tree became a stick, and a distraught Tub had only 15¢ to find a replacement. Also needless to say, he devised a plan that not only got him a really nice tree, but paid back Wilbur in spades — especially since Wilbur knew who had done this to him but couldn't admit it. It offered a classic Stanley moral of what goes around, comes around.

The fellers' taunts of Lulu were behind her scamming them the next time a Christmas tree played a key story role, in #54 (Dec 52). Lulu was upset at the sacrilegious notion that the fellers were going to use for a bonfire the one Christmas tree remaining on the lot on the day after Christmas. Tubby argued that the tree wasn't worth anything, and Lulu countered that she could get at least 50¢ with the tree.

The boys laughed, but Lulu, of course, came through — by sawing off the branches and using the trunk and chewing gum to "get" 50¢ that had fallen down a sewer grate. Sadly, Lulu hadn't bet the fellers anything, so all she had to show for her ingenuity was her sewer cash and the smug satisfaction of beating the fellers yet again (which, really, was reward enough).

One of my favorite Christmas-tree tales took place in the "Christmas Diary" issue, when Tubby's money-saving plan of buying a tree in the summer failed to pan out. Left with a ratty, needleless tree come the holiday season, Tub decided to find some way to salvage the sad tree (and maybe make a return on his lost 20¢). He took it to Al's Diner, on the premise that, since Al always gave Tub stale pie, he could give Al a stale Christmas tree in return.

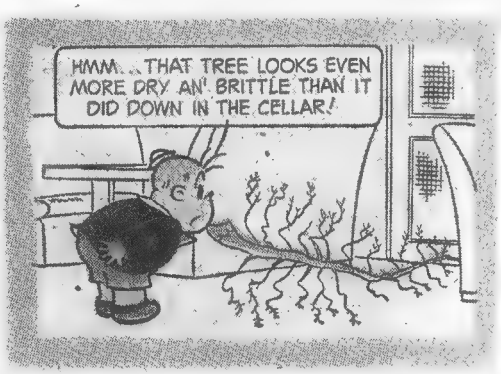
Unfortunately (and fortunately), Tubby arrived just about the time a robber burst in the door, and mayhem ensued. The resulting slapstick left Tub quite a bit ahead on the day. His relentless denial of the fact that this was an ugly-looking stick he was lugging around ("If it was put in water, it would prob'ly perk up as good as new!") always leaves me in stitches.

In fact, a good deal of the tales' humor came in the wordplay that Stanley incorporated, as the plots charged ahead. It often revealed that the kids lived in a wildly different world from the one set aside for adults. I don't know if I picked up all these bits as a kid, but they are among the true pleasures of reading these tales today.

Tubby was filled with too much of the Christmas spirit, giving Wilbur the benefit of the doubt in #30.

The final tree-based tale came in #127 (Jan 59) with another elaborate Lulu adventure. This time, she had so fouled up her mother's Christmas present-wrapping plans by "helping" that Mrs. Moppet forced her husband to take Lulu to buy a tree. (Lulu didn't see the negotiations on this deal, because she was so wrapped up (so to speak) in figuring out who was the recipient of each present she'd wrapped without identifying them.)

Little Miss Moppet was shocked to learn her pop intended to buy their tree at the supermarket, since she'd planned a trip to the country. Mr. Moppet's arguments against that were left in the dirt, when Lulu decided she'd go back to "help" her mother, instead. That gave George no choice, so off they went to the country to find the perfect tree. Mayhem, needless to say, ensued. They straightened out their trespassing on private property within a couple panels, but being chased by a bear took a bit longer to



Tubby's world is not the same as yours and mine, as he made clear in evaluating the tree he got cheap in #166.

Bringing home the perfect tree got a little tougher when a bear tried to offer advice in #127.

work through. They ended up with a great tree, so everything worked out just fine (as it often did).

Another key ingredient in Lulu's Christmas tales consisted, of course, of dolls. Dolls were a big deal to the girls and, perhaps just as important, they meant nothing to the fellers. Interestingly enough, there were four doll-centered stories, they were close variations on two plots — and, in one case, the second version was only a slight rewrite.

The first Christmas doll plot appeared in the first Lulu Christmas story in #18 (Dec 49). In this story, Lulu met a young girl (with a sick father and no mother) who said that Santa

Two times (#18 and #166), Lulu met a poor girl who got no presents and offered her a doll, with somewhat different results each time.

never left her anything. Lulu was stunned (especially since the girl maintained that she was good most of the time). She decided to give the girl her "old" doll, since she'd asked Santa for a new one. The problem, of course, was that Lulu couldn't be certain that Santa would come through.

She expressed her plan and concerns to her mother, who not only reassured her that Santa would do his part but suggested that Lulu write to Santa and suggest that he bring her doll a little early. No doubt overwhelmed by the need for this unlikely plan to work, Lulu agreed that made sense. Sure enough, it did, as Santa came through. What a guy. Lulu then marched off to give her old doll away.

She spent two pages walking to her friend's house, stopping to pick up doll pieces that fell off and reminiscing about the good times they'd had together. By the time she arrived, she realized she couldn't part with her favorite doll. So she raced home and brought the brand-new doll back to give away. It was a touching story that played on an idea that adults seldom recognize: Even kids know the glow of the good old days. And Lulu was definitely loyal to her friends, even if they were dolls.

A variation on this theme appeared in a nine-page extravaganza in the "Christmas Diary" issue, when Lulu was given a great new dolly on Christmas morning. Lulu was sad at moving on from her old doll, which had stuck by her for many years, and it made her morose on what should have been a festive day. To brighten her spirits, she took her new doll out for a walk, enjoying the compliments she received as they sauntered along — even from the fellers!

When they passed the toy store, Lulu saw a raggedly dressed little girl staring forlornly into the empty window. Lizzie hadn't received anything for Christmas, she explained, and she'd hoped to at least see the toys in the window. She was thrilled to see Lulu's new doll and asked to hold it. Reluctantly, Lulu agreed, and, when she saw how much joy it gave Lizzie, she blurted out that she could keep it!

Unable to take back her offer, Lulu invited Lizzie to her house, so she could at least visit with her new doll before it disappeared forever. While Lulu got snacks, Lizzie saw the forgotten old doll in the corner and thought it looked

lonely. As the afternoon ended, Lulu reminded Lizzie to take her new doll — but Lizzie asked if she could have the old one instead. "She's the softest, sweetest dolly in the whole world!"

Lulu, of course, was thrilled that she got to keep her new doll and find a home for her old one, at the same time. It restored her Christmas spirit and left two little girls very happy. In this case, one similar scenario had completely opposite endings.

But two more similar doll stories appeared in #54 (Dec 52) and #171 (Mar 64), including nearly identical dialogue. The basic premise of both was that Tubby's had aunt sent him a doll for Christmas, apparently forgetting he was a boy. Tubby threatened to eliminate the doll (in #54 by burying it in the cellar and in #171 by dropping it off a bridge), but his mother nixed that plan. So Tubby sneaked out (under cover of night) and left the doll by Lulu's front door.

In #54, Lulu saw Tub leave the doll, while, in #171, the doll was wrapped in a shirt with Tub's name. (Tubby would not exactly make a master criminal.) In #54, Lulu became suspicious of why Tubby had left her a doll, so she returned it to his own front door. Tubby, not realizing Lulu had seen him drop it off, opened the door to find the doll and decided it must have walked back to him. So he returned it to Lulu's door with its feet tied together.

Lulu again returned it, and this time Tubby decided the doll had walked on its hands to return, so he tied it head to foot. ("No doll is gonna outsmart me!") When the doll once again returned, an enraged Tubby took it to Lulu and confessed the entire scheme so she would incapacitate the doll so it *couldn't* return. Realizing there was no evil intent, Lulu accepted the doll, and Tubby breathed a sigh of relief, knowing he'd finally rid himself of the demon doll. Lulu, in turn, was so pleased that she gave Tub her new roller skates in exchange, and another confrontation ended happily.

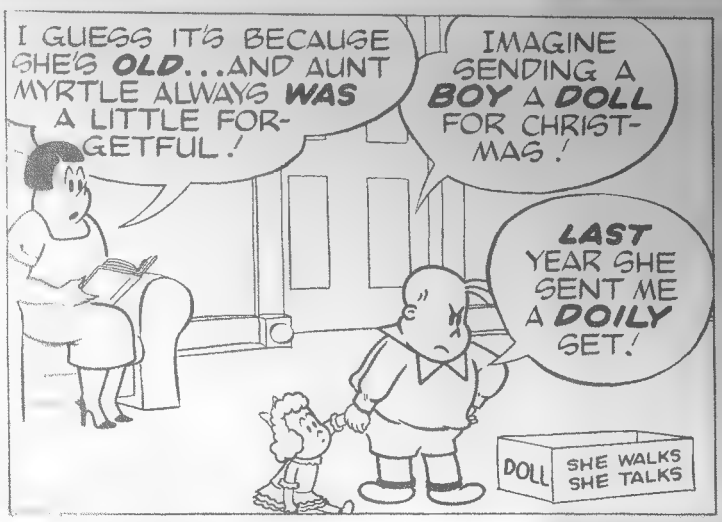
Things went somewhat differently in the second version, since Lulu only *suspected* the doll had come from Tubby. She called him and he vociferously denied any knowledge of it. He couldn't figure out how she knew it was his, until he realized that the doll could talk. So he sneaked over to Lulu's house and taped the doll's mouth shut.

Lulu was shocked to find her doll gagged, so she walked the doll (going hand-in-hand, as she usually did with walking dolls) to Tubby's house for an explanation. Seeing them on the way, a panicked Tub swiped the doll, only to run into the fellers as he ran from Lulu. Falling on her mercy, Tubby got her to agree that it was her doll, and he later explained the situation. Lulu laughed at Tubby — and, this time, he didn't get anything in return.

A similar type of twice-told tale took place with Lulu's little neighbor Alvin in two two-pagers. He banged on Lulu's door in #54 to wish her a merry Christmas about a week too late, and Lulu slammed the door. That caused the wreath to fall off onto his head, and he played she-love-me-she-loves-me-not, leaf by leaf, until it was gone. (She, um, didn't love him.) In the "Christmas Diary" issue's final tale, after the door slammed in his face, he made a snowgirl that resembled Lulu and punched *it* to get his revenge.

I'm not sure how often this type of twice-told tale occurred, but it's not all that surprising, given the quantity of material needed to fill Lulu's comics and the fact that the stories appeared so far apart. In the Tubby's doll stories, what's most surprising, in fact, is that a need was felt to rewrite some of the first tale's elements at all, since it was, frankly, a funnier story with a better ending. They were both eight pages long, so the changes, while significant, weren't necessary. Similarly, the Alvin tales were the same through the first page, but the second page took a different approach to reach the same basic joke.

Needless to say, Lulu and Tubby's interactions did not always go as smoothly as they did in these doll capers, and the festive holiday season didn't completely change that.



In two stories (#54 and #171), Tubby got a doll from his aunt, which he palmed off on Lulu in similar but slightly different ways.

The Spider began spinning a web to catch Lulu's pop when she was blamed for the ornaments falling off her tree in #66.

Nowhere was that more apparent than when a Christmas misadventure brought out Tubby's alter-ego, The Spider, to solve a dastardly crime. These hilarious tales let Tubby's bizarre perception of life take over the show, even if he did actually solve the crime in most cases (which wasn't hard, since the guilty party was almost — but not always — Lulu's pop).

The Spider's first Christmas adventure occurred in #66 (Dec 53), when Lulu was accused of knocking all the ornaments off the tree. (Another tree story!) Actually, the tree had lost all but one, and Tubby managed to take care of that detail. The Spider (who spins a web to catch the guilty) returned on stilts as a tall, dark, handsome stranger whom Lulu supposedly invited into the house. (It could happen.) Tubby then feigned injury and was placed in the bed next to where Lulu's pop was resting, so he would be taken into the confidence of Lulu's pop, who would confess. It could happen.

And it actually did. Lulu's pop (who was not exactly fooled by Tub's disguise) chatted with Tubby and ultimately did confess. So it all worked out just as The Spider had planned (except for George's reaction to being revealed).

Tubby's plan in #166 to predict only bad presents for the girls (with his glass door knob) began to unravel when Annie arrived.

The Spider was back spinning his sticky holiday web in the "Christmas Diary" issue, when Lulu's stocking went missing. Tubby accused her pop (of course) and set about to prove it. This involved his putting on a cap with antenna and hanging a picture around his neck so he'd look like a TV set showing a Western. Lulu's pop didn't like Westerns, he explained, so he wouldn't pay any attention to The Spider, as he went about his business. Tubby's mind was truly a labyrinthine place that you didn't want to visit often.

An elaborate set of clues and a series of events led the guilty party to be revealed. It, of course, turned out to be Lulu's pop, annoying Lulu no end. Tubby being proved right was not something you wanted to experience too often.

Tubby had annoyed Lulu in a new way earlier in that "Christmas Diary" issue, when he began predicting what kids would get for Christmas. He based his predictions on his crystal ball: technically, an old glass door-knob. Lulu was intrigued at the idea of being able to enjoy her presents in advance and on Christmas. She was about to fork over her dime, when Annie arrived to complain about the present Tubby had predicted she'd receive: a bearded-lady kit.

Seeing another sale slipping away, Tubby revised Annie's prediction. While Lulu was off getting her dime, Tub reflected on why it was that he predicted such awful presents for the girls. He chortled at the truly awful prediction he had planned for Lulu. ("A funny thing about girls is that they always believe bad news if they get it from an official source, like a newspaper or a crystal ball.") Unfortunately, he was so pleased with the awfulness of the prediction that he blurted it out before Lulu had paid.

Upset, Lulu refused to pay, and Tubby relentlessly whined for the money he was owed, giving readers some great wordplay, as Lulu stalked off and spent her dime. Finally having enough of Tub's whining, she chased him away, apparently not as convinced by the official source of her gift prediction as Tubby had anticipated.

Perhaps the strangest Lulu Christmas tale was a solo Tubby story. That's not surprising, really, since Tubby often took part in more exotic tales, usually in his own magazine. In fact, he had a couple of holiday adventures in his own title, and, in one of them, his buddies, the little men from Mars, helped Santa Claus on Christmas Eve. (Lulu seldom appeared in Tubby's own series, leaving him to investigate his own wacky world.)

The tale in *Lulu* #127 (Jan 59) was even more fanciful (especially since the little men from Mars showed up regularly to help Tub). In it, Tubby discovered a scenic Easter egg mixed in with the ornament boxes lying by the tree on Christmas Eve. Peering inside the egg, he saw a scene of dancing bunnies. He tried

to put it on the tree, but he fell and hit his head.

When he awoke, he found he was inside the egg, and the bunnies dismayed him with their ignorance of Christmas, which was imminent. But then it started to snow, and Tubby climbed up out of the view-hole in the egg to find that he'd left the front door open when he'd checked for snow, and the drift now covered the entire living room.

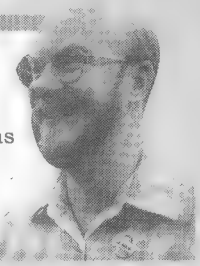
The snow reached waist-high (at least on Tubby), and he collapsed exhausted, unable to stop the snow from filling the room. When he awoke this time, guess what? He was in the living room, right where he'd fallen earlier. So it was all a dream! Except, when he picked up the egg and looked inside, the bunnies were celebrating Christmas.

It was a truly weird Christmas tale, standing out from the rest that focused on Santa, trees, dolls, and the other accoutrements of the holiday season. But it was in keeping with the rest of Lulu's world and especially Tubby's. The number of Christmas stories told during Lulu's run wasn't as extensive as it could have been — none appeared between 1955 and 1959 or between 1964 and 1970 that I know about. But the ones that *were* published are all well worth reading, even before you run out of super-hero Christmas tales from back in the day.

Tubby's fanciful adventures made it into a Lulu comic (#127) when he met some bunnies inside an Easter egg on Christmas Eve.

Known to fans worldwide as "Mr. Silver Age," **CRAIG SHUTT** has waxed nostalgic about comics of old in ***CBG*** since 1992. His latest book, ***Baby Boomer Comics***, is available from F&W Publications at (800) 258-0929, offer CBHCS. Send comments and suggestions to *craigshutt@ameritech.net*

"Ask Mr. Silver Age" is ©2006 Craig Shutt



Looking for Lulu?

There's good news, if you want to read these great old tales. Another Rainbow Publishing released a series of six three-book slipcased sets of *Little Lulu* comics in black and white, beginning at the beginning and running through #87. Done in a similar format to the E.C. collections, they can be pretty pricey (and good luck finding the first two sets).

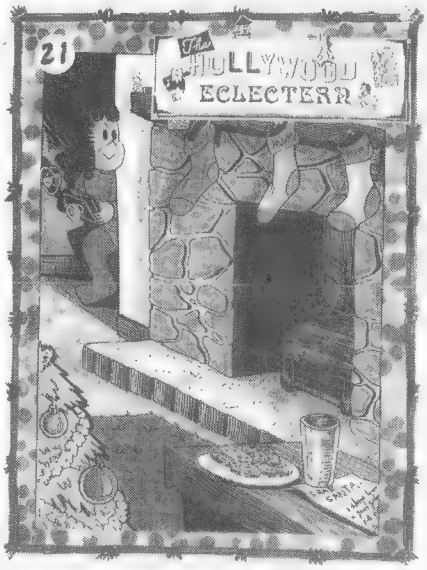
Fortunately, Dark Horse has been reprinting those comics (using Another Rainbow's art) in a series of smaller books that typically collect four to six issues. They are cheap and readily available, so I pity the fool who tells Mr. Silver Age he can't find Lulu comics!

If you'd like to know more about Lulu and her best-known writer, John Stanley, subscribe to *The HoLLywood Eclectern*, which has been recommended here before. It's an irregularly produced, photocopied (often in color), and stapled fanzine published by Ed Buchman. It includes all types of fan-contributed stuff: articles, personal reminiscences, examples of strips and cartoons, and other pieces with an emphasis on the sheer joy of old comics and Stanley's work.

Even more amazing than the old-time fanzine approach in this digital age is that it's free. Once you send him your address, he'll keep sending you issues as he has enough material (which, admittedly, hasn't been often in the last few years). There's not even a charge for postage or copying expenses — but please send him stamps or a few bucks to help out.

The fanzine printed an index produced by Bradley Tenan that listed the Christmas stories that appeared in *Little Lulu* issues. I'm indebted to that list to ensure I didn't miss any for this article.

To subscribe, send a note to *The HoLLywood Eclectern*, Box 4215, Fullerton, CA 92834. Tell him Mr. Silver Age sent you!



The* HoLLywood Eclectern *often has used holiday covers in the past, such as this one from #21 (Christmas '96).

A-ten-hut!

Saluting G.I. JANE

by MICHELLE NOLAN

For the past two decades or so, *G.I. Jane* has frustrated a small cadre of dedicated collectors of obscure 1950s comics. Now that I have finally completed my run of all 11 issues from 1953-55 after a search of more than a decade, she deserves another salute.

If you like Bob Oksner's colorful art on DC humor comics of the 1950s and '60s, you would love G.I. Jane. She's a highly entertaining military version of the dumb, but generally good-hearted, blonde so often found in pop culture in the days before women's liberation.

Though produced by Stanhall, one of numerous obscure publishers that came along at the wrong time to prosper in the 1950s, G.I. Jane was apparently one of the few creator-owned characters of the period. How many comics in those days carried the lines "created by" and "illustrated by" on the cover, along with a copyright notice from the creator at the end of every story? (For some reason, these lines were left off three of the 11 covers.)

In this case, the creator was Hal Seeger (also credited as editor for part of the series), and the illustrator was Bill Williams, an enchanting humorist who deserves much more recognition than he has ever received. A handful of comics-box-digging completists of 1950s obscurities avidly pursue Williams' work, including Southern California's Dan Stevenson (who kindly located the final two issues I needed), Gary Watson, Stan Molson, and John Shaner.

Indeed, Williams' work is well worth pursuing. He did the two outrageously funny issues of the 1962 Dell title *Kookie* — that's another story! — plus plenty of other less-than-famous but terrific humor work, including Dell's *Henry Aldrich* in the early 1950s.

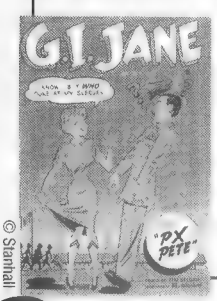
G.I. Jane #1

May 1953 ★★★½

Writer: Hal Seeger
Pencils: Bill Williams
Inks: Williams
Cover: Williams

"Girl (Pvt.) Meets Boy (Lt.)" • 6 pp.

Private Jane Whirly tries on a female captain's coat — and finds that a certain handsome lieutenant is more than willing to salute her.



The standard "female outranks male" dating dilemma gets an amusing twist, when Jane finds herself facing up to a reality check.

"The Pin-Up Boy" • 6 pp.

"The Three-Hour Pass" (Katie) • 2 pp.

"The Uninvited Guest" • 7 pp.

"The Sergeant with a Soul" (P.X. Pete) • 5 pp.

Untitled Jill Jones, WAC story • 2 text pp.

No CGC copies

Then 10¢ NOW $75

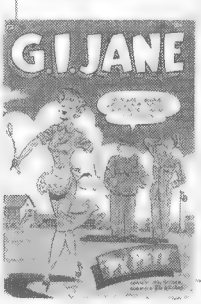
G.I. Jane #2

Jul 1953 ★★★½

Writer: Hal Seeger
Pencils: Bill Williams
Inks: Williams
Cover: Williams

"The Lost Weekend" • 12 pp.

Jane's plans to attend a dance with one man, then another, wind up thwarted in a hail of complications, when she tries to solve the problem.



This complicated mini-epic is a good example of why shorter humor stories are often funnier than longer tales.

"Oh, Captain, My Captain!" • 6 pp.

"Let's Dance" (Katie) • 2 pp.

Untitled The Sarge story • 1 pp.

Untitled P.X. Pete story • 5 pp.

Untitled Jill Jones, WAC story • 2 text pp.

No CGC copies

Then 10¢ NOW $45

© Stanhall

Even though Stanhall's titles were distributed by giant Independent, the firm that was connected with National (DC) Comics, they are far more difficult to find than most other comics of the 1950s, along with such little-known related imprints as Trojan, Story, Master, Merit, Aragon, and Premier. The horror comics from these imprints have been well documented, especially since they were often so outrageous, but otherwise their ouevre has never been fully appreciated by the collecting community.

G.I. Jane is perhaps the finest among the titles from those imprints. By now, however, one of the best known is *Muggy-Doo — Boy Cat*, who has been immortalized in ***CBG*** for the sheer commercial insanity of the character's name. (If you want to know more about Muggy-Doo, buttonhole either ***CBG*** Editor Maggie Thompson or esoteric comics king Scott Shaw! at the convention in San Diego.)

G.I. Jane, by the way, is probably the only place you can find the covers to all four issues of *Muggy-Doo* featured in full-page house ads! These were placed on the inside front covers of *G.I. Jane* #2-5, thereby earning Muggy-Doo the distinction of being perhaps the most balleyhooed obscure title in the history of comics. The

G.I. Jane #3

Sep 1953 ★★★

Writer: Hal Seeger
Pencils: Bill Williams
Inks: Williams
Cover: Williams

"Washday Blues" • 6 pp.

Jane tries to hang her "unmentionables" on a remote-controlled cannon — but finds a way to avoid a blow-up with her superiors.

Here's an example of how an outrageous idea can develop into a really funny story.

Untitled Patti story • 2 pp.
"The Disguise" • 7 pp.
"He Who Laughs Last" (P.X. Pete) • 5 pp.
Untitled The Sarge story • 1 pp.
"The Semi-Private" • 5 pp.
Untitled Jill Jones, WAC story • 2 text pp.

No CGC copies

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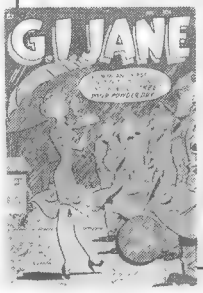
G.I. Jane #4

Nov 1953 ★★★

Writer: Hal Seeger
Pencils: Bill Williams
Inks: Williams
Cover: Williams



"The Power of a Woman" • 6 pp.

Jane and Katie find themselves acting like just two of the guys, when they inadvertently wind up facing live ammo on an obstacle course.

An absurd situation turns into an amusing dilemma for Jane and Katie, much to the pleasure of a colonel.

Untitled Patti story • 2 pp.
"Make Me a Star" • 9 pp.
"Pardon My Negligee" • 3 pp.
"You Can't Hound a Chow Hound" (P.X. Pete) • 5 pp.

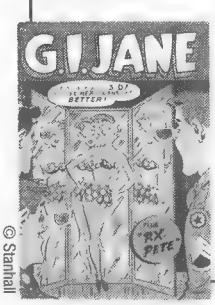
No CGC copies

Then 10¢ NOW $45

G.I. Jane #5

Jan 1954 ★★★½

Writer: Hal Seeger
Pencils: Bill Williams
Inks: Williams
Cover: Williams



"G.I. Cinderella" • 8 pp.

A fellow officer promotes Jane to Major for a day — and the honor lasts all the way until he turns back into a private at midnight.

The theme of rank vs. social privilege is handled with delightful slapstick humor in one of the funniest stories in the series.

"G.I. Jealousy" • 9 pp.
Untitled The Sarge story • 1 pp.
Untitled Patti story • 2 pp.
"Red Tape" • 1 pp.
"A Star Is Born" (P.X. Pete) • 5 pp.

No CGC copies

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G.I. Jane #6

Mar 1954 ★★★

Writer: Hal Seeger
Pencils: Bill Williams
Inks: Williams
Cover: Williams

"Miss-Understanding" • 6 pp.

Jane is jealous, when Sergeant Tom Wills winds up with the wife of a buddy who is in sick bay.

This strip ranges wildly from the normal to the surreal, and the stories don't get much more surreal than this one.

"The Dream Man in the Nightmare" (Patti) • 2 pp.
Untitled G.I. Jane story • 1 pp.
"Night Maneuvers" (P.X. Pete) • 5 pp.
"Such Brass" • 6 pp.
"The G.I. Desire" • 4 pp.

No CGC copies

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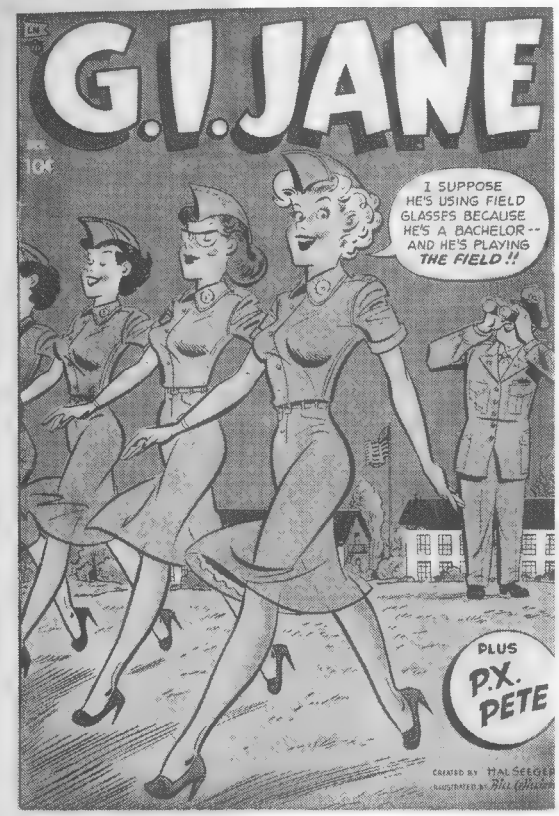


only issue of *Muggy-Doo* listed — much less pictured — in the *Gerber Photo-Journal* is #1, although the volume of complaints about that omission has been distinctly muted.

The covers of *G.I. Jane* were far more appealing. They rank, in fact, among the best humor covers of the period. Because only *G.I. Jane* #1 and #5 appear in the *Photo-Journal*, they have remained largely unappreciated except by fans of Williams. It's likely the missing issues deserve their rank of "6" in the *Photo-Journal*, which didn't even list #11 (Mar 55, but misdated 1954 in the indicia). That was the only Comics Code-approved issue and may be the scarcest. If it hadn't been for Stevenson's help, I would still be searching for it.

As far as I know, the Seeger-Williams G.I. Jane appeared only in these 11 issues and nowhere else in comics or pop culture. (We're not referring in any way to the recent Demi Moore movie, of course.)

There was a war heroine named G. I. Jane as a five-page backup feature in Fiction House's *Rangers* #67-69 (the last three issues), but that title was gone by the time Stanhall's *G.I. Jane* #1 (May 53) hit the stands. At any rate, that surely was a coincidence, since hundreds of minor characters flooded the newsstands in that era. The name G.I. Jane may have been inspired by the well-known *G.I. Joe* from Ziff-Davis, one of the most successful war comics of the 1950s in the days before Hasbro toys. Or perhaps Seeger recalled the original "G.I. Joe" created during World War II by cartoonist Dave Breger for *Yank*, the military service magazine.

Even if the stories in *G.I. Jane* #1-11 had not been as nicely polished as they were, the clever covers alone would make this series highly collectible. The best cover is #1, where the amazing-

G.I. Jane #7

May 1954 ★★★

Writer: Hal Seeger
Pencils: Bill Williams
Inks: Williams
Cover: Williams

"False Arrest" • 6 pp.

Complications ensue, when Jane locks a pair of handcuffs on Sgt. Tom Wills during a dance — but she waltzes right out of the dilemma in typical fashion.

Jane's statement says it, when she tells Tom she'll never be able to marry him: "You made such a fuss when I put handcuffs on you — you'll never stand for a ball and chain."

"Overnight Pass" (Patti) • 2 pp.
"He's in the Army Now" • 6 pp.
Untitled The Sarge story • 1 pp.

No CGC copies

Then 10c NOW $35

G.I. Jane #8

Jul 1954 ★★★

Writer: Hal Seeger
Pencils: Bill Williams
Inks: Williams
Cover: Williams

"See Here, Private (Eye) Whirly" • 8 pp.

A colonel assigns Jane to find out why a case of canned peaches has been stolen — and her attempt to become a private eye winds up in hilarious fashion.

Here's a good example of how a good story results from what seems like a pedestrian premise.

"Man to Ma'm" • 6 pp.
"The Dream Girl" (Patti) • 2 pp.
"Boomerang!' (P.X. Pete) • 4 pp.
Untitled The Sarge story • 1 pp.
"The Fourth for Bridge" • 5 pp.

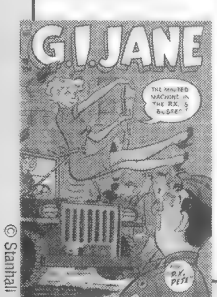
No CGC copies

Then 10c NOW $35

G.I. Jane #9

Mth Yyyy ★★★★

Writer: Hal Seeger
Pencils: Bill Williams
Inks: Williams
Cover: Williams



"The Little Black Book" • 7 pp.

When Sgt. Wills finds a little black book with Jane's name in it, she finds out why the colonel has included her.

This is one of the most amusing stories in the entire series — and it could have happened in real life.

"The G.I. Blues" • 8 pp.
"The Joke's on Everyone" (P.X. Pete) • 5 pp.
Untitled Patti story • 2 pp.
"The Tennis-Match Racket" • 3 pp.
Untitled Jill Jones, WAC story • 2 text pp.

No CGC copies

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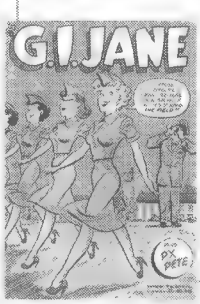
G.I. Jane #10

Dec 1954 ★★★

Writer: Hal Seeger
Pencils: Bill Williams
Inks: Williams
Cover: Williams



"The Impractical Joke" • 6 pp.

Jane finds she has to hide in the men's barracks, when a practical joke backfires on her.

It's amazing how creator and writer Hal Seeger could recycle typical slapstick military situations and still make them funny.

Untitled Patti story • 2 pp.
"General Confusion" • 7 pp.
"The Payin' Customer" (P.X. Pete) • 5 pp.
"The Runaway Jeep" • 5 pp.
Untitled The Sarge story • 1 pp.
Untitled Jill Jones, WAC story • 2 text pp.

No CGC copies

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© Stanhall

ly bubble-headed Jane Whirly is shown responding to a reprimand concerning the single stripes located on her legs: "I know — but *who* looks at my sleeves?" Issue #7 is the raciest, where Jane has converted her uniform into a creative low-cut version fit for dancing and cocktails. Considering the generous display of Jane's cleavage, the Comics Code would never have passed this one.

Then, of course, there was the inimitable cover of #6, on which our well-endowed Jane asks two smiling soldiers about her Jeep: "Would you look and see if there's anything wrong with my chassis?" That one probably went right over the heads of most kids.

Most of the stories dealt with the multitude of complications involving Jane's relationship with the long-suffering Sgt. Tom Wills and her attempts at social involvement with officers who aren't supposed to be involved with a private. In many stories, her identity is somehow camouflaged.

Seeger apparently had plenty of creative freedom, because stories ran the gamut from one to 12 pages. Most were in the five- to seven-page range, which seems ideal for humorous stories. Interestingly, the 12-pager in #2 is actually probably too complicated for a child to follow.

Seldom has the often arcane military concept of rank and its privileges and responsibilities been dealt with better than in the consistently humorous pages of *G.I. Jane*. That's what makes the series so appealing.

Jane popped onto the scene with no origin or explanation in #1, just as if she had been doing her funnybook bit on the stands for years. Nor was there ever any explanation of where she came from. This distinguished her from many of her counterparts but may have baffled many origin-oriented readers.

G.I. Jane #11 Mar 1955 (misdated 1954) ★★★

Writer: Hal Seeger
Pencils: Bill Williams
Inks: Williams
Cover: Williams

© Stanhall

"Thanks for the Memory" • 7 pp.

When Jane forgets she has an iron in her hand, a salute leads to her loss of memory and plenty of funny consequences.

Sgt. Tom Wills satisfyingly winds up with Jane after ironing out a few problems with a fellow sergeant who tries to take advantage of her memory loss.

"Horse Sense-Less" • 5 pp.

Untitled The Sarge story • 1 pp.

"Blind Date" (Patti) • 2 pp.

"Strike It Rich" (P.X. Pete) • 5 pp.

No CGC copies

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Fun in the Fifties

It's sad that *G.I. Jane* ran only 11 issues, since this was easily one of the funniest and most original comics being published in the mid-1950s. The title easily represents some of the best work of noted humor artist Bill Williams.

Many second-tier publishers went out of business in the 1954-56 period, leaving almost nothing but a handful of major publishers. Stanhall Publications — connected with Trojan, Master, Merit, Story, and Aragon, among other long-forgotten imprints — was one of those companies, so even a title as good as *G.I. Jane* couldn't be saved. *G.I. Jane*, however, deserved a much better fate. Most of the stories were often laugh-out-loud funny. Moreover, they represent genuine period pieces originating with the country's fascination with military themes during the 1940s and the first half of the 1950s. The last issue, the first with the Comics Code Authority seal, was misdated March 1954 in the indicia.

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This section features listings for retail comics stores around the U.S. arranged by state. Traveling comics collectors of all types search for new stores to dig through on their vacations, business trips, etc. (be sure you mention that you saw it in CBG!) Advertise your establishment here, include your name, contact person (this will not appear in the listing), address, city, state, zip, phone, fax, if you carry CBG in your store and approximately 10 words (or less) of miscellaneous description, for only $276.00 for 12 consecutive issues. Mail to: Comics Buyer's Guide, 700 E. State St., Iola, WI 54990.

Retailers listed in bold sell Comics Buyer's Guide in their stores. For information on how you can sell Comics Buyer's Guide in your store contact your Comics Distributor or our Bulk Sales Department at 715-445-2214.

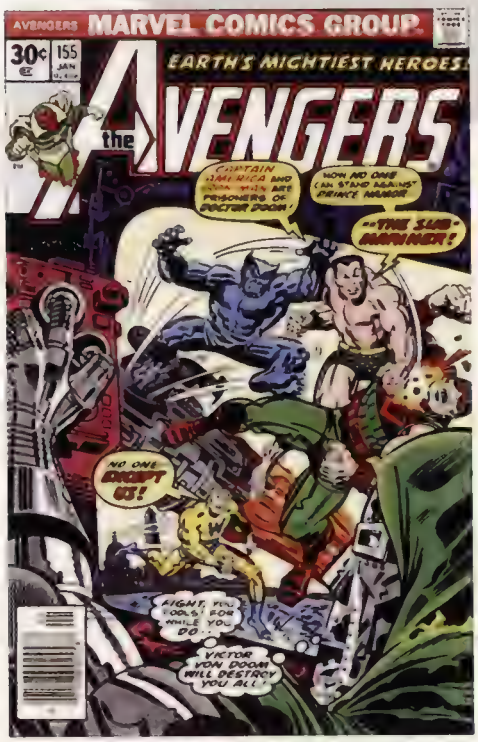
Bob Almond

10 FAVORITE COMIC BOOK COVERS

Ink-Slinger outlines favorites

Bob Almond is a 15-year veteran inker on such titles as *Warlock and The Infinity Watch, Bloodshot, Black Panther, JSA All Stars, Vampirella: Revelations, Captain Gravity and The Power of The Vril,* and most recently WildStorm's *A Nightmare on Elm Street* series. He also writes the "Inkblots" column for *Sketch* magazine.

"As a longtime comics fan starting around '76-'77 (I also began collecting many Silver Age comics), when asked to contribute a 10 favorite covers list, I found myself aghast and clueless. I'm fairly indecisive by nature and my memory ain't worth squat, so I subsequently flipped through my *Photojournal Guides to Marvel Comics* for guidance and found that I was passionate about way too many images. And how would I choose them? Sentimental value or artistic merit? I decided to go with the first, nostalgic option for this list favoring some of my Marvel-centric first or early issues of titles I was bought back at the age of 9 or 10, avoiding Marvel magazine covers. Oh, the misery that is editing down."



Avengers #155 © 1977 Marvel Characters Inc.; art by Jack Kirby and Al Milgrom

***Avengers* #155 (Jan 77).** *"This was my first issue of what would become my favorite title and motivate me to collect the entire run. And George Pérez' powerful, interior work, inked by the underrated Pablo Marcos, inspired me to want to be a comics creator, then and there."* **Orig. price: 30¢ Current NM price: $6**

Fantastic Four #177 © 1976 Marvel; art by Jack Kirby and Joe Sinnott

***Fantastic Four* #177 (Dec 76).** *"Considering the time period, many of Marvel's covers were rendered by 'The King,' and, thus, a majority find their way to my list. Once again, the powerful interiors were by George Pérez during a magical era."* **Orig. price: 30¢ Current NM price: $6**

Top 10 sponsored by: MASTRO AUCTIONS

Incredible Hulk #212 © 1977 Marvel; cover by Rich Buckler and Ernie Chan

***Incredible Hulk* #212 (Jun 77).** *"My first issue was #211, and it was hard to whittle down to one favorite cover from this period on the title, but this one edged out the others."*

Orig. price: 30¢ Current NM price: $7

Thor #257 © 1977 Marvel; cover by Jack Kirby and Joe Sinnott

Thor* #257 (Mar 77).** *"My first issue of* ***Thor*. 'Nuff said!"*

Orig. price: 30¢ Current NM price: $5

X-Men (1st series) #110 © 1978 Marvel; art by Dave Cockrum and Terry Austin

***X-Men* (1st series) #110 (Apr 78).** *"I was lucky enough to have picked up this title starting with this issue soon after Chris Claremont, John Byrne, and Terry Austin commenced their legendary run."*

Orig. price: 35¢ Current NM price: $20

Defenders #45 © 1977 Marvel; art by Jack Kirby

***Defenders* #45 (Mar 77).** *"My first ... What a fun period ... I loved the Keith Giffen and Klaus Jansen interior art, and the Jack Kirby covers were the frosting on the non-team cake."*

Orig. price: 30¢ Current NM price: $4

Top 10 sponsored by: MASTRO AUCTIONS

Amazing Spider-Man #166 © 1977 Marvel; cover by John Romita Sr. and Frank Giacoia

***Amazing Spider-Man* #166 (Mar 77).** "*'War of the Reptile Men' was my first Web-Head experience back when John Romita was still producing Spidey covers.*"

Orig. price: 30¢ Current NM price: $9

Captain America #210 © 1977 Marvel; cover by Jack Kirby and Frank Giacoia

***Captain America* #210 (Jun 77).** "*My premiere issue introduced me to Jack Kirby's Red Skull, Arnim Zola, and Doughboy all wrapped up in a macabre Kirby floating-head cover. Hoohah!*"

Orig. price: 30¢ Current NM price: $4

What If ... ? #11 © 1978 Marvel; art by Jack Kirby and Joe Sinnott

***What If ... ?* #11 (Oct 78).** "*Who could resist this one?*"

Orig. price: 60¢ Current NM price: $4

Black Panther #1 © 1977 Marvel; art by Jack Kirby and Mike Royer

Black Panther* #1 (Jan 77).** "*I figured that this was apropos to make the list. And how awesome that many of these wild, weird characters and concepts were revisited by Priest, Sal, and myself on our* ***BP *run.*" **Orig. price: 30¢ Current NM price: $9**

www.mastronet.com

ACTION FIGURE & TOY MARKET REPORT

by TOM BARTSCH

Let holiday cheer battle the dark side

It's not Halloween, but this month's selection has a dark feel to it. It's a good thing the holiday cheer these collectibles will provide will combat the dark side.

Witchblade PVC Figure

Organic Hobby, a company that has made many collectors giddy by bringing Japanese properties to the United States, has announced a new line in conjunction with GDH: Witchblade "Masane Amaha." "Masane Amaha" is the lead character (and blade-wielder) in *Witchblade*, an anime series based on the U.S. comic book of the same name. However, the new series features a new storyline and new characters.

To go along with that series, Organic Hobby is offering a $50 eight-inch PVC figure of "Masane Amaha" that will be available in April. Look for a blade accessory and a custom base.

More information is available through such national distributors as Diamond and Entertainment Earth. Retailers looking to carry the product can call (310) 575-3084.

Cloak and Dagger

Diamond Select Toys has been getting rave reviews for its Marvel Select line with its iconic scenes and action shots of some of Marvel's favorite characters. One of the latest releases are Cloak and Dagger, not exactly mainstream characters.

The partnership between Cloak and Dagger revolves mainly around light and dark. Dagger is the light master who can hurl light projectiles among other weapons at opponents, and Cloak is a big dude in a cape that sucks people into a dark dimension. It's also handy for teleportation, which has made him the resident bus driver for the current Marvel "Civil War" storyline.

The Dagger figure is a good likeness with its articulation; the Cloak figure is really just a head and a cloak. This actually makes sense, because it's rare to see his body, given that whole dimensional portal he's got in his cape. Putting the figures together is as simple as connecting Dagger to a post that can be inserted into where Cloak's chest should be. More information is available at *www.diamondselecttoys.com.*

Spider-Man vs. Venom

There is no shortage of Marvel collectibles in the marketplace. But, for even more sculpts, check out Sideshow Collectibles' line of "vs." dioramas. One of the next releases will be "Spider-Man vs. Venom," slated to ship in the first quarter of the year. The piece, cast in polystone, shows Spider-Man and Venom in mid-throw-down. "Spider-Man vs. Venom" is limited to 1,250 pieces that retail for $124.99 each. The piece stands nine inches tall.

There will also be a Sideshow exclusive edition, which shows Spider-Man battling Venom's host, Eddie Brock. More information on these pieces is available at *www.sideshowtoy.com.*

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GAME NEWS REPORT

by **BILL BODDEN & JAMES MISHLER**

GamingReport.com becomes CBGXtra's sister site

F+W Publications Inc., publisher of ***CBG*** and such other comics and games-associated hobby titles as ***Scrye*** and ***Comics & Games Retailer***, recently announced the acquisition of ***GamingReport.com***, the leading website for news and reviews for the hobby gaming industry.

Since its creation in 1999 by Dan Sivils, ***GamingReport.com*** has provided hundreds of thousands of readers worldwide with news and reviews about role-playing games, collectible card games, and board games such as ***Dungeons & Dragons***, ***Magic: The Gathering***, and ***Settlers of Catan***. Thousands of hobbyists and industry professionals alike daily consult the ***GamingReport.com*** website numbers of times. ***GamingReport.com*** will continue to operate under that name, complementing ***Scrye*** and ***Comics & Games Retailer***.

"We are very excited to expand our offerings online with the addition of the top site for gamers," said ***Scrye*** and ***CBG*** Publisher Jeff Pozorski. "By teaming the resources of the leading adventure games website and the leading magazines for gamers, we expect to greatly expand the services of all to the hobby."

Dan Sivils, founder and former editor of ***GamingReport.com***, said, "***GamingReport.com*** has become the source for breaking news and information on the hobby game industry, making the search for a new home that would continue this effort difficult. F+W's focus, enthusiasm, and proven ability make them the best choice to continue my efforts. I am confident that F+W will take ***GamingReport.com*** to the next level while staying true to my original goal of keeping readers informed on game industry news and events in the best way possible."

The acquisition coincides with the seventh anniversary of the acquisition of ***Scrye*** magazine by Krause Publications, an imprint of F+W, in 1999. Since that time, through the efforts of an editorial staff of veteran gamers including Joyce Greenholdt and James Mishler, the magazine's frequency has gone from quarterly to monthly and has spun off books and other publications about games. F+W Editorial Director of Interactive Media John Jackson Miller said, "We've greatly admired what Dan built in ***GamingReport.com***. We'll work to continue that reporting tradition, while at the same time providing many additional useful resources to its readers."

WizKids brings Hellboy back to *'Clix*

WizKids recently announced plans to reintroduce Hellboy figures to its collectible miniatures games. Designed to be compatible with both the ***HeroClix*** and ***HorrorClix*** product lines, the ***Hellboy and the B.P.R.D. Action Pack*** will be released in March 2007 and will include seven figures familiar to fans of Mike Mignola's comic-book series from Dark Horse. ***Hellboy*** tells the story of a demon turned monster-hunter and the Bureau for Paranormal Research and Defense, whose sole purpose is to protect an unsuspecting populace from paranormal threats. The comics were adapted for a live-action film in 2005 with a sequel on the way for 2008 and an animated movie due out soon.

The ***Hellboy Action Pack*** will be packaged in a window box and will include seven monster cards and victim tokens for use with ***HorrorClix***. The figures will feature a standard figure dial, making them seamlessly compatible with ***HeroClix*** as well. Due to the nature of the comic book series, it's clearly a natural crossover product, giving fans of both the super-hero and horror genres new figures to enjoy.

For more information on WizKids and its products, visit *www.wizkids-games.com*. To learn more about Hellboy and the B.P.R.D., check out the Dark Horse Comics website at *www.darkhorse.com*.

Goblins gaming webcomic goes to press

Goblins, a webcomic that shows what its like to be a goblin in a ***Dungeons & Dragons***-like world, has been published in its first trade paperback, ***Goblins: Life Through Their Eyes Book One***. At 120+ pages in length, including never before seen bonus comics, *The Origin of Forgath's Helmet* and *'Not Walter' Screams Like a Little Girl*, ***Goblins: Book One*** shows the transition of the goblin protagonists from being hilarious buffoons doomed to become adventurer fodder to becoming heroes themselves. Complete with inside jokes poking fun at the antics of role-players and gamers, ***Goblins: Book One*** has made fans laugh at the characters and themselves.

"It's easy to make fun of gamers... it takes some effort to laugh with us, though... Don't mock us for playing roleplaying games — mock us because the rules for grappling are too complicated," said Monte Cook, ***Dungeons & Dragons*** notable and a lead designer on ***Dungeons & Dragons Third Edition***. "It's just this sort of thing that drew me to ***Goblins***. This comic laughs with us, not at us. It's clear that every pen stroke in every panel contains a real love of the games we play. This isn't the comic of someone on the outside looking in, it's from someone on the inside with us."

www.goblinscomic.com

Annihilation makes for explosive scenarios

"Annihilation" is a current storyline in Marvel Comics, spotlighting the company's cosmic characters. Annihilus, a classic foe of the Fantastic Four, is leading a huge armada of insectoid aliens called the Annihilation Wave, laying waste to all before them. Opposing them are virtually all the cosmic heroes of the Marvel universe. Annihilus' goal is to master the Power Cosmic, so he's begun to meddle with the affairs of Galactus himself. With the new *HeroClix* set *Supernova* having a cosmic theme, it seemed inevitable to use the new set to create scenarios based on "Annihilation."

The storyline involves dozens of characters; for flavor purposes some of these *HeroClix* characters should be used by players: **Annihilus**, **Drax the Destroyer**, **Moondragon**, **Nova**, **Quasar**, **Ronan the Accuser**, **Silver Surfer**, **Super-Skrull**, **Terrax**, and **Thanos**. In addition, all these scenarios are meant to be played on the *Supernova* set's Deep Space Map, though they can be modified.

For the purpose of these scenarios, Annihilus and Nova are archenemies.

Drax the Destroyer in this storyline has a human companion, a young girl named Cammi. She can be represented by the **Franklin Richards** bystander token, though any other bystander agreed upon by players may be substituted. Cammi helps keep Drax focused, so if she's removed from play due to the actions of an opposing player, Drax gains the Battle Fury power if he currently does not have it.

Shortly after the arrival of the Annihilation Wave, Xandar, the home of the Nova Corps, was attacked and its Worldmind took refuge in the sole survivor of the Nova Corps, Richard Rider, a.k.a. Nova. With the Worldmind and all of the Nova Power concentrated within him, Nova became the leader of the forces dedicated to stopping Annihilus. At the beginning of play, you may give Nova the Leadership ability to represent this.

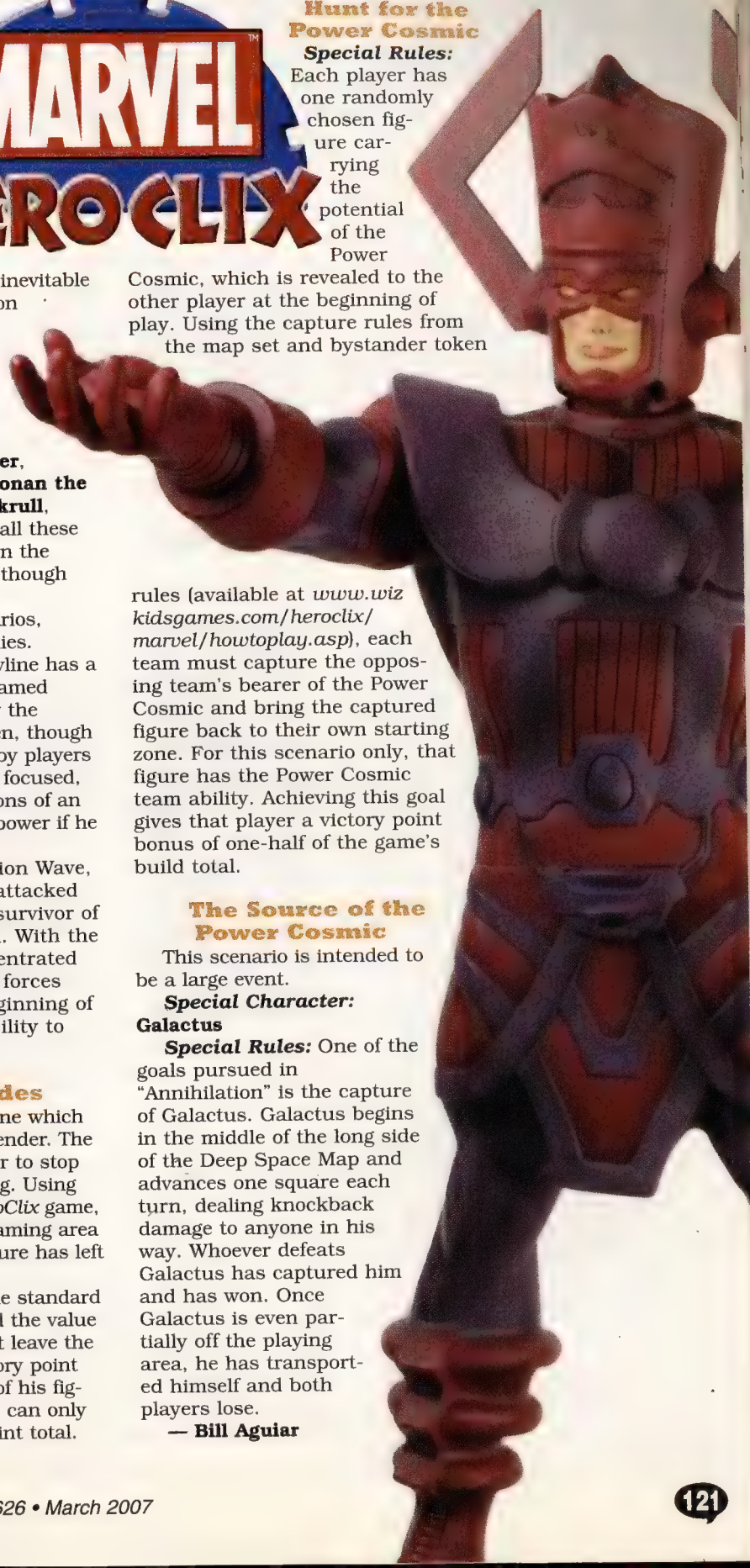
Defense of Nycos Aristedes

Special Rules: Players randomly determine which one is the attacker and which one is the defender. The attacker must get past the defenders in order to stop the civilians of Nycos Aristedes from escaping. Using the standard 50-minute time limit for a *HeroClix* game, the attacker must move his figures off the gaming area from the defender's starting area. Once a figure has left the board, it may not return.

In order the determine the winner, use the standard victory point rules, but the defender can add the value of any of the attacker's figures which did not leave the board before the end of the game to his victory point total, while the attacker may add the value of his figures which did. A player's victory point total can only be increased by up to his original victory point total.

Hunt for the Power Cosmic

Special Rules: Each player has one randomly chosen figure carrying the potential of the Power Cosmic, which is revealed to the other player at the beginning of play. Using the capture rules from the map set and bystander token rules (available at *www.wizkidsgames.com/heroclix/marvel/howtoplay.asp*), each team must capture the opposing team's bearer of the Power Cosmic and bring the captured figure back to their own starting zone. For this scenario only, that figure has the Power Cosmic team ability. Achieving this goal gives that player a victory point bonus of one-half of the game's build total.



The Source of the Power Cosmic

This scenario is intended to be a large event.

Special Character: **Galactus**

Special Rules: One of the goals pursued in "Annihilation" is the capture of Galactus. Galactus begins in the middle of the long side of the Deep Space Map and advances one square each turn, dealing knockback damage to anyone in his way. Whoever defeats Galactus has captured him and has won. Once Galactus is even partially off the playing area, he has transported himself and both players lose.

— Bill Aguiar

COMICS MARKET REPORT

Industry indicators for OCTOBER 2006

BACK ISSUE MARKET

CGC (Comics Guaranty LLC) had graded
813,930 comic books
as of its **October 10** population report.

At any given time, eBay offered
98,400 auctions
in its comic-book category.

NEW COMIC-BOOK MARKET

Counting just its Top 300 **comic book titles**, Diamond Comic Distributors sold to comics shops approximately...
6.1 million copies
... **unchanged** from the same month last year.

If all sold, those copies were worth, at full retail, approximately...
$19.06 million
...**up 5%** from the same month last year.

Comics shop final orders for the Top 100 **new trade paperbacks** sold by Diamond were worth approximately...
$5.19 million
...**up 38%** from the same month last year.

Combined, those products equal...
$24.26 million
...**up 11%** from the same month last year.

The total of **all comic books, trade paperbacks, and magazines** retailers bought from Diamond was approximately...
$30.59 million
...**up 5%** from the same month last year.

The **average price** of the typical comic book ordered by retailers was...
$3.29
...**up 9¢** from the same month last year.

Mastro wraps up 2006 with December Premier Auction

More than 2,600 lots, comprising a wide range of collectibles, are offered in Mastro Auctions' final sale of 2006, scheduled to run through Dec. 8 online and via phone bidding.

The sale includes the company's second major installment of comic books and original art, since Mastro's newly created Comic Books and Comic Art Division held its first sale in August.

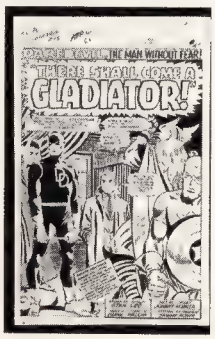
According to Division Vice President Chris Porter, the August event, "created the desired industry 'buzz' which has raised expectations and excitement for the December sale.

"The record-breaking price of more than $200,000 for the Steve Ditko Spider-Man art served as an exclamation point on our initial effort. It proved we have the process to attract comics collectors and big numbers. Our focus in this second sale was to increase the amount of material available and concentrate, not only on high-end pieces, but medium condition items, which make up the majority of the market."

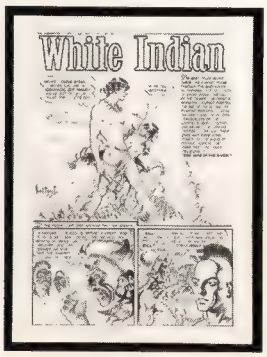
Among the items offered in the December sale is a copy of *Green Lantern* #1 (Sep 41), CGC-graded VF/NM 9.0, with a minimum bid of $10,000. A copy of *Batman* #2 (Jun 40), CGC-graded NM- 9.2 (one of two copies that have received that grade from CGC with none graded higher to date), also has a minimum bid of $10,000.

Rounding out the Golden Age highlights is a copy of *Captain America Comics* #1 (Mar 41), CGC-graded FN 6.0 with cream to off-white pages, which has a minimum bid of $5,000.

Among the sale's Silver Age highlights is a copy of *Incredible Hulk* #1 (May 62), CGC-graded VF/NM 9.0 with white pages. It has a minimum bid of $5,000, as does a copy of *Amazing Spider-Man* #1 (Mar 63), CGC-graded VF+ 8.5.



The original-art category is highlighted by the splash page of *Daredevil* #18 (Jul 66) by John Romita Sr., who has signed the original page, as well. The minimum bid is $3,500.



The original art for a seven-page White Indian story from *Durango Kid* #3 (Feb 50) by Frank Frazetta is also in the sale with a minimum bid of $2,500.

The auction began Nov. 20 and concludes Dec. 8. More information about the sale, including information on registering to buy from Mastro Auctions, is available via (630) 472-1200 and the firm's website, *www.mastroauctions.com.*

Brent Frankenhoff can be reached at ***megaguide@krause.com.***

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- Sales figures for comics as they're calculated
- Timelines of events from comics history
- Our ***CBG*** glossary of comics terminology
- An online index of ***CBG***'s past reviews (a start, anyway!)
- Plus answers to many frequently asked questions about the comics hobby. Be sure to suggest ***CBGXtra.com*** to anyone learning about the field!

Join the discussion at...

www.cbgxtra.com

Don't forget to sign up for our e-mail newsletter! It's free!

Market forces beyond anyone's control

What makes a hot comic?

by MARC PATTEN

I have two beautiful daughters, Jolie and Rena. Jolie, my 5-year-old, had a book she loved me to read to her when she was little: *What Makes a Rainbow?* by Betty Ann Schwartz with illustrations by Donna Turner. Rena is 2½, and the book is now a favorite of hers, as well. In this simple masterpiece, mother rabbit sends her little bunny around to his friends to find out what colors are needed to make up a rainbow.

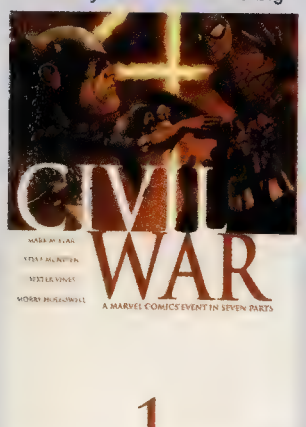
Which got me thinking, of course, about comics and the obvious question: What makes a comic "hot"?

There isn't a simple answer to this question, of course, but it's a subject I've touched on many times in past columns. Nevertheless, I'll do my best not to repeat myself. Previously, I've written about how the right combinations of the following can be combined to create a comic book that performs well in the aftermarket, including: deaths and first appearances, popular creators, new storylines that affect continuity, older storylines that are affected by new continuity, marketing hype, popular characters, crossovers, and the obvious: rarity and perceived rarity.

It's these last two that interest me. We all want what we can't or don't have. This is a horrible aspect of human nature that permeates nearly every aspect of life I can think of: a bigger house, a nicer car, a better job. Human beings have an innate desire to better

Dozen to dig for

It's official: "Civil War" is the sales juggernaut to end all juggernauts. Late schedule or not, this is one steamroller that crushes anything in its path. Crossovers, tie-ins, story filler: It's all good, and fans can't get enough. Can the publishers keep up the heat from the last two years after all the big events are finished in early and mid-2007? Will "World War Hulk" and DC's follow-up to *52* keep the momentum? Stay tuned.



1. *Civil War* #1-4. This is the story of the year by far. Every issue brings more twists and turns to the Marvel universe's landscape, and it doesn't look good for the heroes of either side. If Speedball ends up as director of S.H.I.E.L.D., we'll know it was all a dream. May-Jul 06. Cover: $2.99@ Current prices: #1 and #3 $5, #2 $7, #2 2nd print $6.

2. *Justice League of America* #0 and #1 (tie). Who would have thought that The Red Tornado was one of the most interesting characters in the DC universe? That's how good this series is from Brad Meltzer and Ed Benes. Buy this now. Oct-Nov 06. Cover: $2.99 @ Current prices: $6 @.

3. Civil War cross-overs: *She-Hulk* #8 and *Wolverine* #42 (tie). If there were a war to determine the king of all the "Civil War" tie-in books, *She-Hulk* would definitely come out on top. A super-low print run has made her the queen of the aftermarket with no challengers in sight, but she'd better watch her back, because there's a Panther on the loose and he's coming on strong. Jun-Aug 06. Cover: $2.99 @ Current prices: *She-Hulk* #8 1st print $25, *Wolverine* #42 1st print $12.

4. *Anita Blake: Vampire Hunter: Guilty Pleasures* #1-2 (tie). What happens when a whole ton of retailers missed the boat on ordering a popular series due to its switching publishers (to Marvel) and not making it into the Diamond *Previews* catalog in time? Instant sellouts and hot-book hall of fame, that's what. Oct-Nov 06. Cover: $2.99@ Current prices: #1 1st print $8, #2 1st print $5.

5. *Amazing Spider-Man* #529-532 (tie). These four Spidey comics are still the talk of the town and key reading to the "Civil War" main storyline. The reprint isn't holding back the hounds on the hunt for the first prints, and, with The Wall-Crawler switching sides, it ain't over till it's over. Feb-May 06. Cover: $2.99@, Current prices: #529 1st print $15, 2nd print $6, 3rd print (Wieringo variant) $5, #530 $12, #531 and #532 $7@.

6. *Black Panther* #21. A key "Civil War" tie-in in which Namor and The Black Panther choose sides, only no one at Marvel thought to label this

themselves in all areas. We want "stuff," even if it's inner peace, world peace, or a piece of the action.

So, when an issue becomes "hot," that development is usually derived from more people wanting it than there are copies available. But *why* they want it is the debate. Do they want it because of some aspect or combinations in the list above or because something in their brain suddenly turns on when they hear that something has sold out or is otherwise unavailable — and the comic in which they previously may have had little interest is suddenly desired?

There is a collector mentality that says: If something is tough to get, it must be worth having. Why *else* is there demand for all the variant and retailer incentive covers that proliferate in the Diamond *Previews* order catalogue month after month?

John Taddeo, whose *Zoom Suit* comics series I touched on last month, brought up an interesting point in our conversation about the comic-book marketplace and hard-to-find comics, especially those with low print runs.

We discussed the aspect that independent comics that have low print runs and become "hot" are (1) only ordered by a few hundred stores and (2) usually ordered in quantities where most copies are pre-ordered, leaving barely any on the racks for the average customer to see. Announcements that comics of this nature have "sold out" and are going back to press for additional printings can create artificial demand. After all, a comic book sold out that most folks never even got to see, and now a few curious fans who can't find it are stirring the pot.

I thought this way of thinking bore some merit on an even higher level.

Take Brian Wood's *Supermarket* series from IDW or Warren Ellis' *Fell* from Image, for example. Both had moderate print runs considering the creators involved. Both comics experienced the same sellout phenomenon within a month after their initial releases and similar "hot" status as far as new issue sales or back-issue market activity were concerned. To give you some additional information, *Supermarket* #1 sold 5,300 copies in February 2006 and was listed at #200 on the Top 300 chart. *Fell* #1 sold 22,600 copies in September 2005 at #96 in the chart.

It's all perception. Based on the fan following of each creator, let's say there are 10 fans within a area that has four comic shops within a 60-mile radius for *Fell* and four fans who wanted to check out *Supermarket.* Let's say that three out of the four shops ordered enough *Fell* for a quick sellout and one shop didn't order it at all. Let's say that, of those four shops, only one of them ordered *Supermarket* and it only ordered three copies.

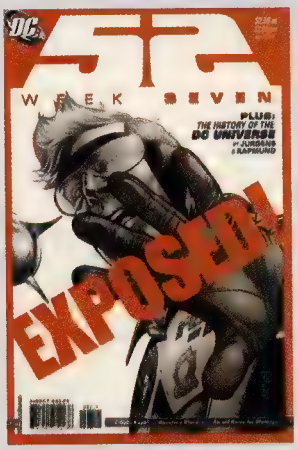
So any shops that ordered these titles sold out of them in the first two weeks: a reasonable amount of time, considering that both titles weren't ordered heavily and most shops don't over-order non-Marvel or DC titles. The

When an issue becomes "hot," that development is usually derived from more people wanting it than there are copies available. But *why* they want it is the debate.

low-selling title with a big honkin' "Civil War" logo or mention anything about the war in the solicitation text before the book was ordered. Presto, instant sleeper hit. Nov 06. Cover: $2.99, Current price: 1st print $16.

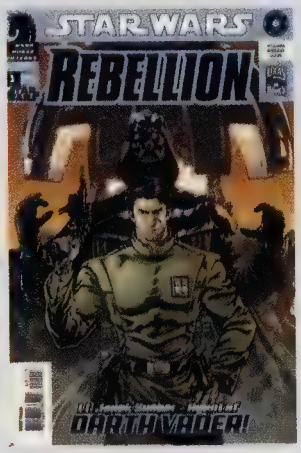
7. *Action Comics* #844. Fans seem to love Richard Donner (and that Geoff Johns guy isn't too shabby, either) and they can't wait to see what he'll do to our beloved comic-book version of The Man of Steel. The killer art by Adam Kubert just seals the deal. Dec 06. Cover: $2.99, Current price: 1st print $5.

8. *52* #1, #7, #9, #11, #15, and #19 (tie). This series gets more intriguing each week. Despite reorders being available on all issues except #19, most shops aren't reordering every issue that sells out any more, and certain issues, like



the above and any after #20, are getting difficult to find. Jul-Nov 06. Cover: $2.50@, Current prices: $3@, #19 $4.50.

9. *Star Wars* #1s (tie). Fans are giddy with excitement over the impending *Star Wars* television series and the 30th anniversary of the franchise. First prints of the three new series are still on fire, and *Star*

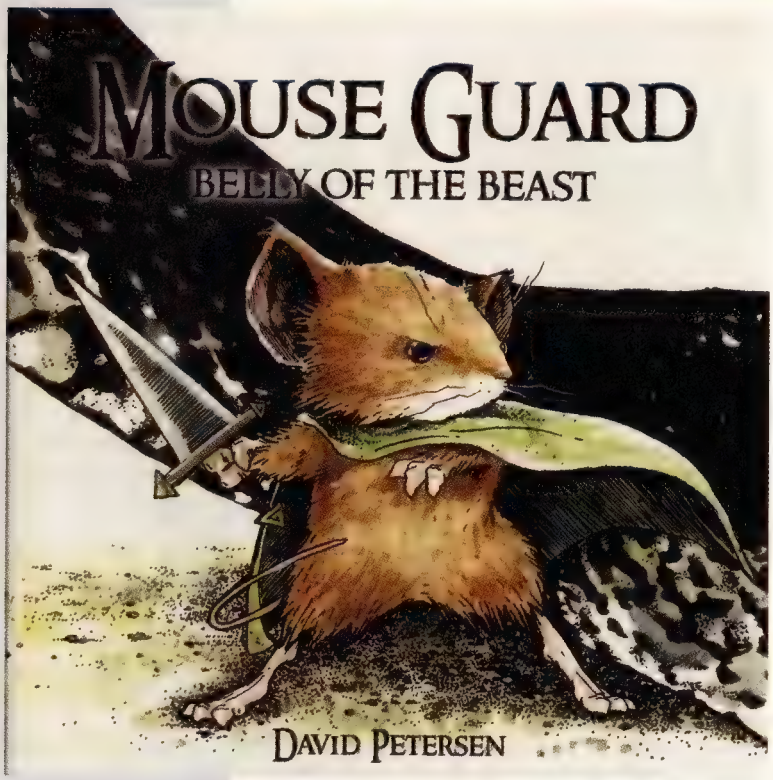


Wars: Dark Tide looks to be a powerful hit, as well. Jan-Jun 06. Cover: $2.99@, Current prices: *Star War: Knights of the Old Republic* #1 $12, *Star Wars: Legacy* #1 $10, *Star Wars: Rebellion* #1 $8.

10. *Heroes for Hire* #1. Fans love this book, if for nothing more than its colorful wit and a cast of solid, underused, grade-B characters. And those covers by Billy Tucci and Mark Sparacio keep them coming back. Aug 06. Cover: $2.99, Current price: $6.

11. *New Avengers: Illuminati* #1 and *New Avengers* #7 (tie). Back on the Dozen again, the heat on this one-shot got even bigger when the second printing arrived. And don't forget *New Avengers* #7 has The Illuminati's first appearance. Apr 06. Cover: $3.99, Current price: *New Avengers: Illuminati* #1 1st print $12. Mar 05. Cover: $2.99, Current price: *New Avengers* #7 $7.

12. *Fantastic Four* #536 and #537 (tie). Note to Marvel: Give us the real Thor and give us the real Thor now. Enough teases. Enough Cyborg clones. We want our Thor. Apr-May 06. Cover: $2.99@, Current price: #536 1st print $8, #537 1st print $7.



"There's a *huge* buzz about this book, and it's already sold out. I bought one copy yesterday, but I'm thinking I might pick up one or two more."
— ComixFan23

few fans of each series who didn't get to their shop to buy a copy off the shelf and didn't want to risk cash by pre-ordering either issue are now out of luck. The smart shop owner might even try to reorder a copy or two, if they sold out, especially if the out-of-luck fans asked about the comic book directly.

There are a few problems with this all-too-common scenario.

One: I'd hazard a guess that only one out of three fans who come into a comics shop looking for something actually asks the clerk for it, if it isn't apparent on the shelf. Most of the time, if we don't see it, we assume it sold out, and, if there are other stores in the area, we'll just try another one. A store owner or manager can't try to find you something, if you don't ask. That's the beauty of a comics specialty shop: it (usually) gives you lots of personalized service that you can't get anywhere else.

Two: Even if the inquiring fan asks the shop owner to order a copy of a non-Marvel or non-DC comic book or the store was smart and tried to re-order more when the book sold out, the store will most likely never see another copy on its racks — despite the fact that a publisher may still have copies available.

Now, you're saying, what is this boy smoking? That doesn't make any sense. You know what? You're right. Logically that doesn't make a bit of sense, but it's the truth, and here's why: It's because, in general, Diamond doesn't order huge quantities of extra copies of non-major titles from non-Marvel-or-DC publishers. Diamond will wait until it gets enough reorders for an issue to meet the publisher's minimum order — which could be one copy, 10 copies or 50 copies of an issue.

"So," you ask, "what's the problem? A store sells out, it reorders a few copies, and in a few weeks they show up." But there's the rub. If a store calls to order two copies of *Supermarket* #1 or checks the order system online, he more often than not will be told the title is not in stock and is going to "backorder." Most often, if an item is going to backorder, the store owner will never place the actual order, because a "backorder" isn't a guaranteed order. (That is, the comic may or may not ever show up and, if it does, you have no idea when it will.) So, if no backorder is placed, the distributor's computer won't show the amount of customers who requested the item, only the amount of backorders that were actually placed.

It's a self-defeating system. Distributors and retailers don't want to take lots of risk, but, if a distributor doesn't have the goods directly in stock for immediate shipment, the chance that an order will be placed is far less. The bottom line is that smaller publishers will never know what the demand is for a particular issue, because they have no idea how many retailers are inquiring about an item that isn't in stock but may not be available from the publisher.

The result is that it can take only a few fans going from store to store trying to find a copy of an issue to create a larger demand than there may actually be. This can snowball, as each shop then *tries* to order another copy but never actually *does*, because the book is backordered. "My store owner can't get it; it must be 'hot.'"

In the area described above, all four stores each might try to find two copies of each book (eight copies total, for those keeping track), but, in reality, there are only two fans who really wanted the comic and couldn't find it. If this type of thing happens on a national level, and the word gets out about how tough it is to find this comic or that one, then presto: instant "hot" comics.

Don't believe me? Here are some actual on-line posts from a well-known comics site about *Mouse Guard* #1.

— Posted: March 9, 2006, 12:11 p.m. — "There's a *huge* buzz about this book, and it's already sold out. I bought one copy yesterday, but I'm thinking I might pick up one or two more." — ComixFan23

— Posted: March 9, 2006, 10:02 p.m. — "Wow, I just took a look around the Internet and no one seems to have this book. Most places didn't get any." — Cagliostro

If you add to this scenario the few smarter retailers who go direct to a non-exclusive publisher (in the case of Image and IDW they

can't, because those publishers are excusive with Diamond), a few select retailers can often get control over the last remaining copies of an issue before the rest of the country realizes the demand. These retailers who then purchased copies can control the prices and market for these low-print-run comics.

Last month, I gave an example of this very scenario describing my adventures trying to find a copy of the aforementioned *Mouse Guard* #1. When a book like this breaks through as a result of a small amount of positive press combined with low advance orders from retailers (this is called the "sell in"), it can sell out quickly. A small number of curious fans then chase these low-print-run copies, which causes retailers to perceive demand that is larger than it may really be, due to the fact that you have one guy who is going around to every store to locate a copy — the "I can't find it, so it must be really hot" scenario.

Getting back to John Taddeo and *Zoom Suit*: While that book sold extremely well, it never achieved the same kind of cult "hot" status of *Mouse Guard*. The possible reason is that the print runs of even the regular cover of *Zoom Suit* #1 was more than three times that of even a respectable-selling book like *Mouse Guard* #1. Taddeo took a personal risk to print extra copies and made sure that Diamond had copies in stock to sell for reorders. So there was never an opportunity for stores or fans to view a perceived sellout, because Taddeo anticipated the increased demand. Would the book have had "hot" status, if he'd printed half as many copies? No one will ever know.

When a Marvel or DC super-hero issue gets hot, the same scenario of selling out can create artificial demand, as well. Many companies are in the habit of sending out press releases when a comic sells out at the publisher and distributor levels. This type of sellout doesn't mean that all comic-book stores across the country have sold out of a particular issue, only that stores can no longer order more of that issue. There are hundreds of cases where a press release like this has been released and publicized on one or more of the online comic book news sites, and fans have posted message after message

Sellout press announcements can often be self-fulfilling propehcies.

When *Black Panther* #21 was solicited, the advance information stated that the Panther would have a meet-and-greet with Namor. What it *didn't* say was that this meeting was a key *Civil War* tie-in.

that their local stores still have copies on the shelf.

Sellout press announcements can often be self-fulfilling prophecies, however. *Fantastic Four* #536 featured the return of Thor's hammer. The event was well publicized in advance, and retailers ordered larger-than-normal amounts. Marvel told retailers that it would not produce a second printing, if the issue sold out (which it did anyway, but that's not my point). Stores all around had copies weeks after the book came out, but, when Marvel announced the sellout and that, due to retailer demand, it would, indeed, go back to press, suddenly dealers began to mark up copies still on the shelves. Moreover, those who didn't saw fans buying copies of the now-"hot" comic by the boatload. Within a month, not a copy in sight, and prices rose accordingly.

Action Comics #844, the first Geoff Johns-Richard Donner-Adam Kubert issue, was a similar scenario in which it seems that there were copies aplenty everywhere of this hyped storyline. DC announced a sellout, and suddenly every store in my area was sold out, and copies were going for $6 at this past weekend's Big Apple/ National Comic-Con.

Sometimes, mistakes — intentional or not — can cause a sellout and, therefore, create demand. When *Black Panther* #21 was solicited, the advance information stated the Panther would have a meet-and-greet with Namor, The Sub-Mariner. What it *didn't* say was that this meeting was a key *Civil War* tie-in, in which the two world leaders would decide on which side they would choose to support. It was #83 on the Top 300 chart and sold approximately 27,000 copies. Rich Johnston made mention of the issue in his *Lying in the Gutters* column on *comicbookresources.com* as the key *Civil War* book that Marvel forgot to tell everyone about. The comic had a sold-out announcement and forthcoming second printing released two days later. Like the independent comics we've been talking about, this issue had a low print run for a Marvel title and could have sold a lot more, if it had had a *Civil War* logo on its cover. No one even cared, until someone hyped it online. Then, poof, it's now #4 on this month's "Dozen to Dig For."

Anita Blake: Vampire Hunter #1 and #2 were retrosolicited via e-mails and other announcements, when the deal between Dabel Brothers Productions and Marvel was announced in mid-September. It was not listed in the Diamond *Previews* catalog, and many stores missed the announcement and the ordering window for the title and never saw a copy. Marvel overprinted, but the true demand was underestimated. Even though many shops around the country that *did* order the comic had copies to spare, within days of the sold-out announcement from Marvel, the issue was sought after by fans who heard the news and, after the fact, decided they wanted it or had to have it.

It's all perception. There are many comics that have low print runs, have fabulous stories, and legitimately sell out at all levels but never reach that coveted "hot" status. For now, the line between real demand and "I want it because I can't find it" is a blur about which we may never discover the truth.

Next month, I'll get into why I think hooking young teens, not kids, has always been the key to creating lifelong readers.

Marc Patten owns Destination Entertainment, a marketing and product-development consulting company, and Heroes in Action, a pop-culture products convention and mail-order business. He can be reached at **heroesinaction@aol.com**.

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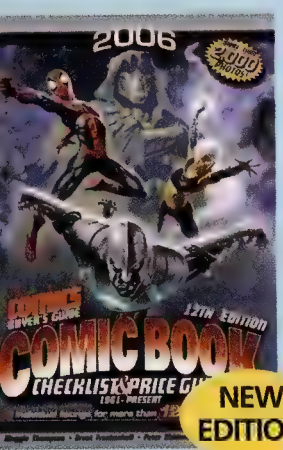

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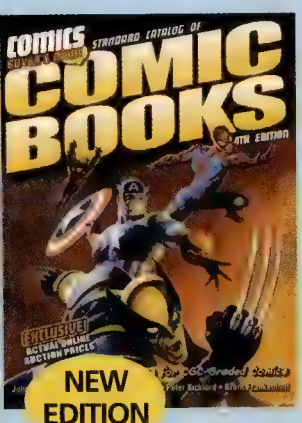

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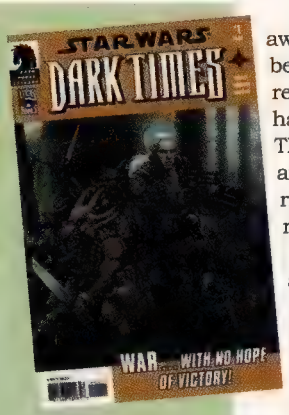
Ten retailers inaugurate Dark Horse 100 Program

Star Wars: Dark Times #1

sketch cover eagerly sought

by WILLIAM INSIGNARES



Dark Horse published 1,000 copies of the sketch variant of* Star Wars: Dark Times *#1, distributing 100 copies each to 10 randomly chosen retailers.

A short time ago, in a town not too far, far away, a meeting was held between elder members of a group known for its agendas and big revelations. History had shown us that this force had supported projects of violence in the past. The importance of the matters to be discussed at this "dark" gathering were unknown to their rivals. Secrecy was a priority, as details were mapped out and events began to unfold.

From the members of this assemblage came an idea that was sure to earn them their name once again. If neighbors or outsiders heard of what transpired at this union, they did not whisper a word of it to the authorities, since no distress signals were reported in the vicinity. *Why?* Today, when everyone is expected to be vigilant for a sign of something different and to help monitor certain groups and people, why and how could this cluster of people get away with such an assembly? Rest easy, dear reader, if what you have just read has "unsettled" you in any way. Before you pick up your cell phone to start dialing those three digits, know that what you've just read is *good* news. Allow me to elaborate:

The group referred to is Dark Horse Comics, and the meeting did not threaten national security but, rather, assisted in securing profitability for certain lucky comic-book retailers. More specifically, the folks at Dark Horse came up with an ambitious plan to excite the comic-book community that has supported it through the past 20 years.

Details. Dark Horse's contest, which ended Oct. 6, was open to retailers with a grand prize of 100 copies of the *Star Wars: Dark Times* #1 artist Doug Wheatley's sketch variant to each of 10 randomly selected retailers. The edition was limited to 1,000 copies, making it one of the most limited *Star Wars* variants.

The chance to win 100 copies of that variant attracted nearly 1,000 retailers to Dark Horse's website. One of the most anticipated and important storylines of the autumn takes place right after The Clone Wars and the events of *Star Wars Episode III: Revenge of the Sith*, covering the galaxy's "Dark Ages." As chaos ensues, due to events of the Clone Wars, the remaining Jedi scatter and are hunted, as The Empire struggles to gain control of the anarchy that has emerged as a result of the imbalance of power in many regions. It's all-out action, as Rebels, Empire, a slew of bounty hunters, and various criminals fight to the death to try to regain the upper hand.

As news of the contest spread, a bit of happy chaos in the comics hobby also began, as frantic collectors tried to secure at least one copy of the coveted book. Usually, variants are available to all comics retailers, so, in this new scenario, one had to hope that one of the winning retailers would sell the collector one of the copies before he or she sold them all to their "regular customers."

The list of the 10 winning retailers was soon released:

The Dreaming Comics and Games, Seattle, Wash.
Collector's Paradise, Winnetka, Calif.
Clint's Books, Kansas City, Mo.
Magic Dragon Comics, Arlington, Mass.
Warp 9, Clawson, Mich.
Heroes and Villains, Hampton, Va.
Cyborg One, Doylestown, Pa.
Dragon's Lair, Round Rock, Texas
Up, Up & Away!, Cincinnati, Ohio
Demolition Comics, Tampa, Fla.

With the help of Google and other methods of location, those retailers were soon flooded with calls and e-mails from *Star Wars* fans and variant collectors gone wild. The pre-selling prices varied, but rumors and speculation put the range between $40 and $100 each. By press time, the issues had just started shipping, and certified copies have yet to emerge, so it will be interesting to see what the bounty on those will bring, when they do surface.

The Dark Horse 100 Program will appear again in early 2007 with a variant cover of the new *Buffy the Vampire Slayer Season 8* #1. Like its predecessor variant, it will be limited to 1,000 copies and will feature a sketch variant cover.

Comics specialist **WILLIAM INSIGNARES** runs **DemolitionComics.com** in Tampa, Fla., which he bills as "The world's first multi-lingual international comics super store." He can be contacted at (813) 832-2692.

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Action Figure #1

Richard Marzelak has a problem. He tends to get so absorbed in drawing comics late into the night that he inevitably oversleeps and arrives late to work. This doesn't sit well with his smug boss at Hasmark, "the world's largest toy and greeting card company." As punishment, he's taken off design work on a line of monster toys and given a new project — The Pretty Pandas — adding insult to the long-standing injury of working at a job he considers below his abilities.

BABOON BOOKS
WRITER: RICHARD MARCEJ
ARTIST: RICHARD MARCEJ
B/W • 32 Pgs.
$3.50

Told through Richard's journals, ostensibly discovered at an estate sale in 2053, the story is appealing to anyone stuck in a cycle of frustrated creative aspirations. While the dialogue is sometimes awkward, the plot moves at a crisp pace, and the characters are sharply drawn and funny.

The art is pretty straightforward and, at its best during Richard's fantasies, denoted by red tinting. The cover, an actual action figure of the artist in a blister pack, is also fun.

★★★ — **Timothy J. Wood**

www.baboonbooks.com

RetroView the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN™

MARVEL COMICS

Reviewed by Brent Frankenhoff

More changes were in store for Spider-Man in 2001. Writer Howard Mackie would be replaced mid-year by J. Michael Straczynski, who would send The Wallcrawler on some of his most challenging adventures yet. New revelations were in store, as well.

The year was also marked by the real-world events of September 11, and Marvel addressed the tragedy in a stand-alone benefit magazine as well as in the pages of *Amazing Spider-Man* Vol. 2 #36. 2001 was also the year Marvel realized it had a legacy in long-running series and added a whole number to several titles.

Amazing Spider-Man ™ Marvel

COST TO OWN THE ORIGINALS IN NM: $48

	UNSLABBED Near Mint
811	5
812	8
812/2nd	2
813	4
814-817	3
818	4
819-825	3
826 ➥Inf. Crisis tie	5
827-828	3
829	6
829/Variant	3
830	4
831-843	3
1000000	1
Ann 1	4
Ann 2-6	3
Ann 7	4
Ann 8	3
Ann 9	4

Adventure Comics
DC, 1938

32	2800
33-35	1450
36-39	1275
40 ➥1st Sandman	36000
41	4700
42	5500
43	3200
44	5500
45	2800
46-47	4200
48 ➥1st Hourman	22000
49-50	1950
51 ➥Sandman cover	2630
52 ➥1st Kirk Manhunter	1600
53-59	1450
60	2500
61 ➥1st Starman	10750
62-65	1300
66	1800
67-68	1300
69	1650
70-71	1275
72 ➥1st Kirby Sandman	13200
73 ➥1st Kirby Manhunter	11500
74-80	1500
81-91	925
92-99	700
100	800
101-102	700
103 ➥Super-heroes start	2400
104	850
105-110	525
111-120	450
121-126	390
127	450
128	400
129-130	375
131-149	340
150-151	425
152	310
153	425
154	310
155	425
156	310
157	425
158	310
159	425
160	310
161	425
162	310
163	425
164-169	310
170-180	255
181-199	235
200	350
201-209	260
210 ➥1st Krypto	2400
211-220	200
221-246	170
247 ➥1st Legion	4400
248-255	130
256	525
257-259	125
260 ➥Aquaman origin	500
261-266	80
267 ➥2nd Legion	740
268	80
269 ➥1st Aqualad	225
270	80
271 ➥Lex Luthor origin	225
272-274	65
275	145
276-280	65
281	60
282	95
283	100
284	60
285-286	110
287-289	60
290	100
291-292	45
293	100
294 ➥1st Mon-El Legion	90
295-298	45
299	55
300 ➥Legion	200
301	70
302-305	55
306-323	45
324-339	40
340	45
341-345	40
346	60
347-350 ➥1st White Witch	40
351-352	50
353-355	35
356	30
357	60
358-366	30
367-372	25
373	22
374	30
375-377	22
378	45
379-380	22
381 ➥Supergirl starts	60
382-389	22
390	30
391-400	22
401-402	21
403	50
404-415	20
416	18
417-427	13
428 ➥1st Black Orchid	28
429-430	15
431 ➥Aparo Spectre	28
432-433	15
434-435	12
436-441	10
442-447	6
448-458	5
459-460	4
461	6
462	7
463-479	4
480-503	3

Adventures of Superman
DC, 1987

0-424	3
425	4
426	3
427-462	2
463	3
464-465	2
466	3
467-479	2
480	3
481-495	2
496-498	3
499	5
500	3
500/Collector's	4
500/Silver	10
501-505	2
505/Variant	3
506-549	2
550	4
551-599	2
600	4
601-623	2

PRICE GUIDE KEY: OTHER GRADES

Unslabbed (loose) Very Fine/Near Mint is **5/6 (83%)** of the unslabbed NM price above
Very Fine (VF) is **2/3 (67%)** of NM
Fine (F) is **1/3 (33%)** of NM
Very Good (VG) is **1/5 (20%)** of NM
Good (G) is **1/8 (12.5%)** of NM

Action Comics

DC, 1938

	UNSLABBED Near Mint
0	3
1 ➥1st Superman	330000
1/Ashcan	20000
2	29250
3	19000
4-5	10600
6	15400
7	15500
8-9	6650
10	8200
11-12	4150
13	6175
14	3825
15	6175
16	3125
17	4350
18	3825
19	4050
20	3825
21-22	2600
23 ➥1st Luthor	7300
24-25	2475
26	2060
27-30	1700
31-32	2600
33 ➥1st Mr. America	7300
34-35	2475
36	2060
37-40	1700
41	1050
42 ➥1st Vigilante	2600
43-46	980
47 ➥1st Luthor cover	1300
48-52	980
53	850
54-60	710
61-63	630
64	750
65-70	630
71-99	580
100	600
101 ➥A-Bomb cover	1200
102-126	525
127	600
128-150	525
151-157	480
158 ➥Superman origin	750
159-161	450
162	500
163-180	385
181-201	340
202-220	290
221-240	240
241	250
242 ➥1st Brainiac	1200
243-251	185
252 ➥1st Supergirl	1200
253	425
254	325
255	225
256-261	100
262	90
263	100
264-266	80
267 ➥1st Colossal Boy	650
268-270	80
271-275	65
276 ➥Legion app.	125
277-284	60
285 ➥Legion app	100
286-294	60
295	90
296	65
297	90
298-299	60
300-316	50
317-324	40
325	50
326-333	40
334	60
335-338	40
339	70
340-346	40
347	50
348-362	40
363-373	30
374-387	20
388	25
389-399	20
400	40
401-406	17
407	15
408	20
409	15
410-411	13
412-415	12
416-418	11
419	14
420-422	11
423-424	10
425	19
426	10
427-436	8
437 ➥Giant-size issue	29
438-439	8
440 ➥1st Grell Green Arrow	25
441	12
442	8
443 ➥Giant-size issue	26
444-454	7
455-465	6
466	7
467-484	5
485	8
486-503	5
504-544	4
545-566	3
567-597	2
598 ➥1st Checkmate	15
599	2
600	5
601-659	2
660	3
661	2
662	4
663-682	2
683-684	3
685-687	2
687/Collector's	3
688-695	2
695/Variant	3
696-699	2
700	3
700/Platinum	5
701-769	2
770	4
771-774	2
775	5
775/2nd	4
776-799	2
800	4
801-810	2

▲ #15

CAPTAIN MARVEL ADVENTURES

A second Shazam!

Following his introduction in *Whiz Comics* #2 (Feb 40, actually the series' first issue), Captain Marvel's popularity quickly grew to the point at which publisher Fawcett Comics granted him his own solo title. Initially a quarterly, it would increase to a biweekly.

Image © 1942 Fawcett

George Tuska art

Lts. Marvel appear

Otto Binder scripts begin

	1 SPR 41	2 SUM 41	3 FAL 41	4 OCT 41	5 DEC 41	6 JAN 42	7 FEB 42	8 MAR 42	9 APR 42	10 MAY 42
NM Price	$27,500	$3500	$1800	$1200	$1050	$750	$750	$675	$675	$675

THE BOTTOM LINE

Amazing Spider-Man #25 ★★★½

© Marvel

Marvel
Jan 2001 • 40 pp.
Writers: Howard Mackie
Pencils: John Romita Jr.
Inks: Scott Hanna
Cover: Romita Jr., Hanna

"Darkness Calling"

Norman Osborn's machinations finally come to fruition, when he reveals his master plan to Peter.

With the feature film looming, Marvel pulled out all the stops to make sure readers and casual fans alike knew that The Green Goblin was back and still a major Spider-foe. Howard Mackie's story is complemented by John Romita Jr.'s moody pencils. Several sequences do an excellent job of showing Peter's descent into a form of madness.

The only drawback to this otherwise excellent issue is that the story continues in *Peter Parker, Spider-Man* #25.

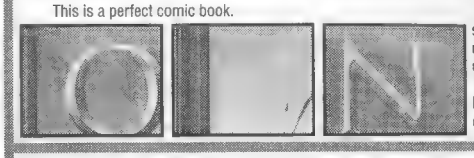
Do-It-Yourself Grading

While **CGC** keeps its grading standards private, these are the **traditional** condition definitions...

Mint

Abbreviated: **M**

This is a perfect comic book.



The term for this grade is the same one used for **CGC's 10.0 grade.**

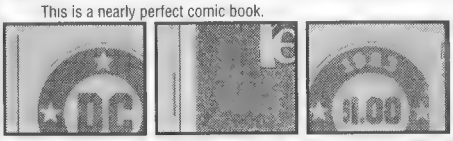
Its cover has full luster, with edges sharp and pages like new. There are no signs of wear or aging. It is not imperfectly printed or off-center.

Occasionally referred to as "Gem Mint," a term used by sportscard dealers.

Near Mint

Abbreviated: **NM**

This is a nearly perfect comic book.



The term for this grade is the same one used for **CGC's 9.4 grade.**

Its cover shows barely perceptible signs of wear.

Its spine is tight, and its cover has only minor loss of luster and only minor printing defects. Some discoloration is acceptable in older comics — as are signs of aging.

Very Fine

Abbreviated: **VF**

A **Very Fine** copy has beginning signs of wear.

The term for this grade is the same one used for **CGC's 8.0 grade.**

There can be slight creases and wrinkles at the staples, but it is a flat, clean issue with definite signs of being read a few times.

There is some loss of the original gloss, but it is in general an attractive comic book.

Fine

Abbreviated: **F, Fn**

A **Fine** comic book is a good-looking copy ... at first glance.

The term for this grade is the same one used for **CGC's 6.0 grade.**

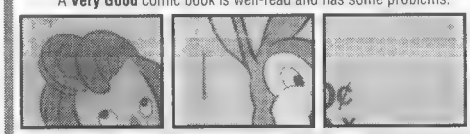
This comic book's cover is worn but flat and clean with no defacement. There is usually no writing on the cover or tape repair.

Stress lines around the staples and more rounded corners are permitted.

Very Good

Abbreviated: **VG**

A **Very Good** comic book is well-read and has some problems.



The term for this grade is the same one used for **CGC's 4.0 grade.**

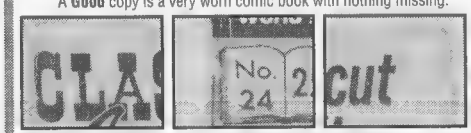
Most of the original gloss is gone. There are minor markings, discoloration, and/or heavier stress lines around the staples and spine.

The cover may have minor tears and/or corner creases, and spine-rolling is generally permissible.

Good

Abbreviated: **G, Gd**

A **Good** copy is a very worn comic book with nothing missing.



The term for this grade is the same one used for **CGC's 2.0 grade.**

Creases, minor tears, rolled spine, and cover flaking are generally permissible in this grade.

Older Golden Age comic books often come in this condition.

Fair

Abbreviated: **FA, Fr.**

A **Fair** copy has multiple problems but is structurally intact.

The term for this grade is the same one used for **CGC's 1.0 grade.**

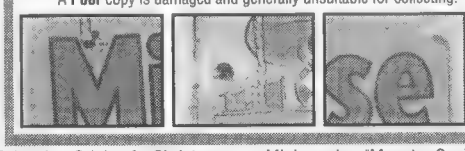
Copies may have a soiled, slightly damaged cover, a badly rolled spine, cover flaking, corners gone, and tears.

Tape may be present and is always considered a defect.

Poor

Abbreviated: **P, Pr**

A **Poor** copy is damaged and generally unsuitable for collecting.



The term for this grade is the same one used for **CGC's 0.5 grade.**

While the copy may still contain some readable stories, major defects get in the way.

Copies may be in the process of disintegrating and may do so with even light handling.

Action-Alpha

$4

Then $2.99 Now $3

	UNSLABBED Near Mint
624	5
625	4
625/2nd	3
626	2
627-635	3
636	5
➥Identity Crisis tie	
637	4
638	3
639	5
640-641	4
642	6
643	12
644-648	3
649	10
1000000	2
Ann 1	4
Ann 2-6	3
Ann 7-9	4

Albedo
THOUGHTS & IMAGES, 1984

0	8
0/A	30
0/B	15
1	14
1/A	10
2	250
➥1st Usagi Yojimbo	
3	10
4-5	4
6-8	3
9-14	2

All-American Comics
DC, 1939

1	5700
2	2000
3	1400
4-5	1250
6-7	980
8	1800
9-10	950
11	1025
12-15	950
16	72000
➥1st Green Lantern	
17	15600
➥2nd Green Lantern	
18	8800
19	13800
➥1st Atom	
20	4850
21-23	2000
24	2200
➥1st Mid-Nite, Sargon	
25	8300
➥Dr Mid-Nite origin	
26	3000
➥Sargon origin	
27	3500
28-30	1250
31-40	1040
41-50	785
51-60	675
61	4400
➥1st Solomon Grundy	
62-70	600
71-88	550
89	1200
➥1st Harlequin	
90	775
91-99	525
100	850
101	1000
➥Scarce	
102	1650
➥Scarce	

All-American Western
DC, 1948

103	375
104	265
105-110	225
111-120	165
121-126	110

All-Flash
DC, 1941

1	12500
➥Flash origin	
2	2400
3-4	1600
5-10	1100
11-15	850
16-20	800
21-32	625

All New Collectors' Edition
DC, 1977

C-53	26
➥Rudolph	
C-54	12
➥Supes v. WWoman	
C-55	15
➥Legion	
C-56	40
➥Superman vs Ali	
C-58	12
➥Supes vs Shazam	
C-60	20
➥Rudolph's Summer	
C-62	12
➥Superman movie	

All Star Batman and Robin Boy Wonder
DC 2005

1/Both	5
1/Special	4
1/RRP	150
2/Both	4
3/Both	3

All-Star Comics
DC, 1940

1	10000
2	3500
3	25000
➥1st JSA	
4	3000
5	2800
➥1st Hawkgirl	
6-7	1800
8	16000
➥1st Wonder Woman	
9-11	1600
12-15	1400
16-25	1200
26-32	900
33	1800
➥Grundy appearance	
34-35	900
36	1300
➥Batmn, Supes app.	
37	900
38	975
➥Black Canary starts	
39-49	900
50	975
➥Frazetta art	
51-56	900
57	1200
➥25-year hiatus starts	
58	12
➥1st Power Girl	
59-61	6
62	8
63	6
64-65	7
66	8
67-68	6
69	10
70-73	6
74	8

All-Star Squadron
DC, 1981

1	4
2-10	2
11-46	1
47	3
48-67	1
Ann 1	2
Ann 2-3	1

All-Star Superman
DC, 2006

1-5	3

All-Star Western
DC, 1970

1	30
2-3	15
4-5	14
6-9	9
10	260
➥1st Jonah Hex	
11	75

All-Winners Comics
TIMELY, 1941

1	16000
➥Cap America starts	
2	4800
3	2850
4	2800
5-6	2100
7-10	1800
11-18	1275
19	3350
21	3500
➥Scarce	

All-Winners Comics
TIMELY, 1948

1	1800

Alpha Flight
MARVEL, 1983

1	5
➥1st Marrina, Puck	
2-10	4
11-19	3
20-24	2
25-27	1
28	3
29-32	2
33	6

Cap joins Army — Cap pin-up — Painted cover — Origin of Mary Marvel — Christmas cover — Mini-comics attached — "Monster Society of Evil" serial begins

	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
NM	MAY 42	JUN 42	JUL 42	AUG 42	SEP 42	OCT 42	NOV 42	DEC 42	JAN 43	JAN 43	FEB 43	MAR 43	APR 43	JUN 43	JUL 43
Price	$590	$590	$580	$590	$590	$550	$550	$1000	$500	$500	$400	$400	$610	$225	$225

Air Gear

Air Gear is one great comic, manga or otherwise. With a theme that crosses over to one of North America's most popular pastimes among the target age group, *Air Gear* tells the story of Itsuki Minami, the toughest kid at Higashi Junior High School, who lives with the Noyamano sisters. A "dangerous" character, he leads his school to victory over a threatening West Side gang. Things go poorly until his roommates teach him "Air Tricks" to clean the school of the West Side gangsters. Those skates are cool — almost like something out of *Rollerball!*

DEL REY
WRITER:
OGURI ITO
ARTIST:
OGURI ITO
B/W • 224 Pgs.
$10.95

The story and art by Ito Oguri captivated my son and kept him reading from start to finish. Unlike some other manga art, Ito's style is clean and easy to follow. His kinetic style is reminiscent of Jose Luis Garcia Lopez and Gil Kane mixed with Marshall Rogers' imaginative panel design.

Air Gear is one of the most popular titles in Japan and, as North American readers pick up on this, it will soon decorate the bookshelves and desks of manga fans everywhere.

★★★ **— Tim Lasiuta**

www.delreymanga.com

ISBN: 0-345-49278-1

#29

CAPTAIN MARVEL ADVENTURES

The (evil) worm turns

The world's wickedest worm began bedeviling Captain Marvel as a disembodied voice emanating from a radio speaker. Finally, in *Captain Marvel Adventures* #27 (Sep 43), readers were able to get their first look at the tiny evil genius.

Image © 1943 Fawcett

Alpha Flight (CONTINUED)

	UNSLABBED Near Mint
34	3
35-45	2
46	3
47	4
➥1st Jim Lee at Marvel	
48-53	2
54	3
55-56	2
57-74	1
75-105	2
106	3
➥Northstar outed	
107-130	2
Ann 1	4
Ann 2	1
Special 1	3

Amazing Adult Fantasy
MARVEL, 1961

7	600
8	475
9-13	425
14	525

Amazing Adventures
MARVEL, 1970

1	30
2-3	20
4-5	14
6	20
7	14
8	22
9-10	20
11	150
➥1st blue Beast	
12-13	30
14	25
15-17	20
18	14
19-25	5
26-28	4
29	5
30-36	3
36/30¢	20
37	8
37/30¢	20
38-39	3

Amazing Fantasy
MARVEL, 1962

15	32000
➥1st Spider-Man	
16-18	5

Amazing Spider-Man
MARVEL, 1963

-1	3
1	27000
➥1st Chameleon	
1/Golden	200
2	3400
➥1st Vulture	
3	4600
➥1st Dr. Octopus	
4	2300
➥1st Sandman	
5	2500
➥Dr. Doom app.	
6	1650
➥1st Lizard	
7	1100
8	800
9	1025
➥1st Electro	
10	990
11	1900
12	825
13	1200
➥1st Mysterio	
14	2050
➥1st Green Goblin	
15	1800
➥1st Kraven	
16-17	800
➥2nd Green Goblin	
18	510
➥1st Ned Leeds	
19	460
20-21	510
22	425
23	510
24-25	500
26	550
27	500
28	450
29-30	240
31	325
32	175
33	140
34	240
35-36	225
37	250
38	195
39	350
➥1st Romita Spidey	
40	375
➥Goblin origin	
41	300
➥1st Rhino	
42	185
➥1st view of MJ	
43	120
44	175
45	115
46	250
➥1st Shocker	
47	105
48	120
49	125
50	625
➥Spidey quits	
51	200
52	150
53	105
54-55	110
56	90
57	80
58	100
59	70
60	105
61	72
62	75
63	160
➥vs. both Vultures	
64	60
65	55
66	80
➥1st Randy	
67-68	60
69	75
70-71	70
72	85
73	50
74	80
75-77	65
78	70
79-80	60
81	55
82-83	50
84-85	55
86	60
87	75
88	60
89	70
90	75
91	50
92	62
93	80
94	65
95	52
96	85
97	72
98	80
99	60
100	100
101	130
102	105
➥Morbius origin	
103	50
104	90
105	25
106	40
107-108	27
109-110	30
111	34
112	30
113	35
114	50
115	33
116	22
117	25
118	22
➥vs. Hulk	
119-120	50
➥vs. Hulk	
121-122	150
➥Green Goblin dies	
123	35
124	42
125	30
126	18
127	25
128	20
129	225
➥1st Punisher	
129/Ace	6
130	20
131	25
➥Uncle Doc Ock	
132	22
133	16
134	28
➥2nd Punisher	
135	45
136	60
➥Harry as Goblin II	
137	25
138	15
139	19
140	17
141	15
142	18
143	15
144	17
145-146	15
147	14
148	25
149	27
➥Spider-clone dies	
150	16
151	24
152	11
153-154	10
155	12
155/30¢	20
156	12
156/30¢	20
157	12
157/30¢	40
158	10
158/30¢	20
159	11
➥vs. Doc Ock	
159/30¢	20
160	9
161	12
162	11
163	10
164	12
165-166	9
167-168	7
169	10
169/35¢	15
170	7
170/35¢	15
171	7
171/35¢	15
172	8
172/35¢	15
173	18
173/35¢	25
174-175	10
176-177	12
➥1st Hamilton Goblin	
178-180	11
181	9
182	8
183	7
184	8
185	7
186-187	8
188	7
189	6
190	7
191-193	6
194	21
➥1st Black Cat	
195	10
196-198	6
199	7
200	10
201	9
202	7
203	6
204	8
205-206	6
207	5
208-211	6
212-218	5
219-220	6
221-222	4
223	5
224-225	4
226	7
227	6
228	4
229	11
230-232	6
233	4
234	6
235	4
236-237	5
238	22
➥1st Hobgoblin	
239	10
240	5
241	4
242	5
243	6
244-245	5
246-248	4
249	5
250-251	6
252	10
➥1st black costume	
253-254	5
255-258	4
259-263	5
264-265	4
266-267	3
268-270	4
271	5
272-273	4
274-276	5
277-279	4
280-284	5
285	6
286	4
287	5
288-289	6
290-293	5
294-295	6
296	5
297	6
298	16
➥McFarlane starts	
299	9
➥Venom cameo	
300	35
➥1st Venom	
301	6
302	4
303	5
304-307	4
308	5
309	4
310-313	5
314	4
315-316	5
317-318	6
319	5
320	3
321	4
322	5
323	3
324	5
325-327	4
328	5
329	4
330-343	3
344	4
345-347	3
348-353	2
354	3
355-357	2
358	6
359	2
360	3
361	6
➥1st Carnage	
362	25
➥2nd Carnage	
363	4
364	3
365	4
366-369	2
370	3
371-373	2
374	3
375	5
376	4
377	3
378	4
379	5
380	3
381	4
382-388	3
388/Variant	2
389-394	3
394/Variant	4
395-399	3
400	5
➥no overlay	
400/Gray	6
➥gray overlay	
400/White	30
➥white overlay	

RETROVIEW
Amazing Spider-Man #26 ★★★

"The Mask"

Following his latest run-in with The Green Goblin, Peter Parker looks for information about his own past.

Howard Mackie presents a nice Done in One story that gives more perspective on Peter's father, Richard, and includes a visit with one of the elder Parker's old friends.

The anecdotes that both Aunt May and Callahan (hmmm, was Mackie reading Spider Robinson's work?) share with Peter are well-presented, but having the last story then resurface during a battle is more than a little clichéd. If Callahan hadn't suspected Spidey's secret before, hearing his own words coming out of The Wallcrawler's mouth would do it.

Marvel
Feb 2001 • 22 pp.
Writer: Howard Mackie
Pencils: John Romita Jr.
Inks: Scott Hanna
Cover: Romita Jr., Hanna

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Flag cover ▼ Mr. Mind cover ▼ 1st Radar ▼

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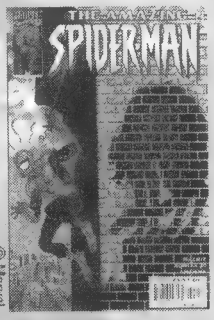
NM Price	$225	$225	$225	$225	$225	$225	$225	$225	$225	$225

RETROVIEW

Amazing Spider-Man #27 ★★



© Marvel

Marvel
Mar 2001 • 22 pp.
Writer: Howard Mackie
Pencils: John Romita Jr.
Inks: Scott Hanna
Cover: Romita Jr., Hanna

"The Stray"

A double-date arranged by Randy Robertson is interrupted by a stray cat that's escaped from A.I.M. and is being pursued by a pair of thugs.

Reading this issue, one could almost hear "Smelly Cat" being sung in the background. Howard Mackie has a field day with the stray that keeps popping up at the worst possible times for Spider-Man.

And, while the thugs hint that it's an escaped genetic experiment, we still don't know all its secrets by story's end, something that will continue as a sub-plot for the next few issues. Speaking of sub-plots, where is Mary Jane? Oh, wait, that's where we're headed next.

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➥Director's Cut
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512 5
513 3
514-520 2
521-528 3
529 15
530 12
531 10
532 12
533-535 3
Ann 1 700
➥1st Sinister Six
Ann 2 550
Ann 3 140
Ann 4 90
Ann 5 75
Ann 6-7 35
Ann 8-9 22
Ann 10-12 8
Ann 13 7
Ann 14 6
Ann 15 7
Ann 16 5
Ann 17-21 4
➥Spidey marries
Ann 21/Direct. 5
Ann 22 5
Ann 23-25 3
Ann 26 4
Ann 27-28 3
Ann 1996 4
Ann 1997 3
Ashcan 1 1

Amazing Spider-Man
MARVEL, 1999
1 (442) 7
1/DF Romita ... 12
1/DF Lee 35
1/DF 5
1/Authentix 8
1/Sunburst 18
2 3
3-11 2
12 3
13-17 2
18-19 3
20 5
21-24 2
25 3
25/Speckle 4
26-29 2
30 5
➥Straczynski starts
31 3
32-33 4
34 5
35 4
36 9
36/DF 20
➥9/11 issue
37 5
38 4
39 3
40 2
41 4
42-43 3
44-49 2
50 6
51-56 2
57-58 3
Ann 1999 5
Ann 2000 4
Ann 2001 3

America's Best Comics
NEDOR, 1942
1 1600
2 850
3 600
4-6 440
7 575
8-10 400
11-20 360
21-24 325
25-31 265

America's Greatest Comics
FAWCETT, 1941
1 1900
2 900
3 675
4-5 500
6-8 450

Animal Comics
DELL, 1942
1 900
2 450
3 340
4 150
5 300
6-7 135
➥War bonds cover
8-10 225
11-15 170
16-20 130
21-25 105
26-30 80

Animal Man
DC, 1988
1 4
2 3
3-49 2
50 3
51-55 2
56 4
57-89 2
Ann 1 4

Annihilation
MARVEL, 2006
1-2 3

Ant
ARCANA, 2004
1 10
1/Red foil 35
2-3 5
3/Variant 6

Ant
IMAGE, 2005
1 5
1/Sketch 3
1/RRP 20
1/Conv 15
2 0
3-8 3

Anthro
DC, 1968
1 50
2-6 20

Aquaman
DC, 1962
1 900
2 275
3-5 150
6-10 90
11 125
➥1st Mera
12-17 75
18 90
➥Weds Mera
19-28 60
29 75
➥1st Ocean Master
30 50
31 45
32 50
33-34 45
35-41 40
42-43 30
44-46 25
47 40
48-49 25
50 75
51 50
52 40
53-58 20
59-63 10

Archie
ARCHIE, 1942
1 12200
2 3325
3 2175
4 1100
5 1000
6 740
7-9 660
10 585
11-15 475
16-20 400
21-24 325
25-30 275
31-35 220
36-40 175
41-50 125
51-60 110
61-70 70
71-80 56
81-90 44
91-99 34
100 55
101-120 22
121-140 16
141-150 13
151-180 9
181-200 5
201-250 3
251-569 2
Ann 1 1350
Ann 2 660
Ann 3 475
Ann 4 345
Ann 5 285
Ann 6 180
Ann 7 160
Ann 8 135
Ann 9 120
Ann 10 110
Ann 11 70
Ann 12 60
Ann 13 58
Ann 14-15 ... 50
Ann 16-17 ... 26
Ann 18-19 ... 22
Ann 20 14
Ann 21-22 9
Ann 23-26 8

Army at War
DC, 1978
1 10

Army of Darkness
DARK HORSE, 1992
1 12
2-3 9

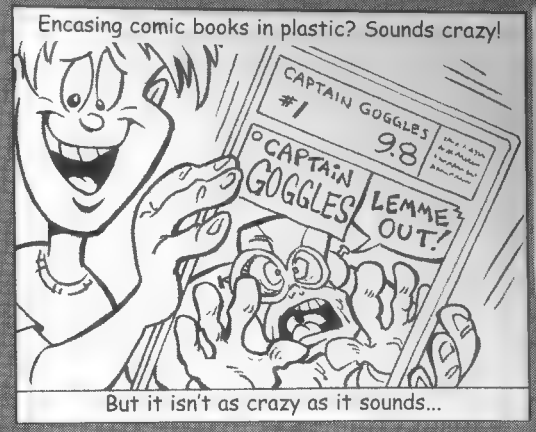
Arrgh!
MARVEL, 1974
1 15
2 4
3-5 3

Astonishing Tales
MARVEL, 1970
1 40
2-5 20
6 12
7-8 15
9 10
10 20
11 10
12 30
➥Man-Thing story
13-20 10
21 25
22 10
23 15
24 10
25 25
➥1st Deathlok
26 10
27-29 7
30-32 5
33 10
34 6
35 7
➥Low distribution
35/30¢ 20
36 10
➥Low distribution
36/30¢ 20

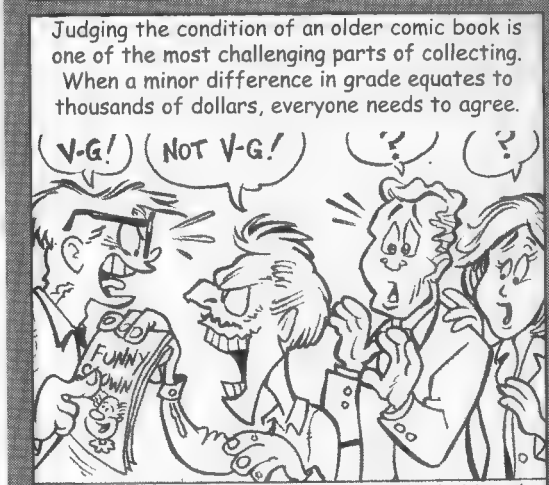
Astonishing X-Men
MARVEL, 2004
1 8
➥Whedon starts
1/Cassaday 45
1/Del Otto 12
1/DirCut 5
1/DF 8
2 16
3 4
4 8
4/Variant 25
➥Colossus cover
5 8
6 5
7 4
8-10 3
10/Variant 5
11-17 3

Astro Boy
GOLD KEY, 1965
1 265

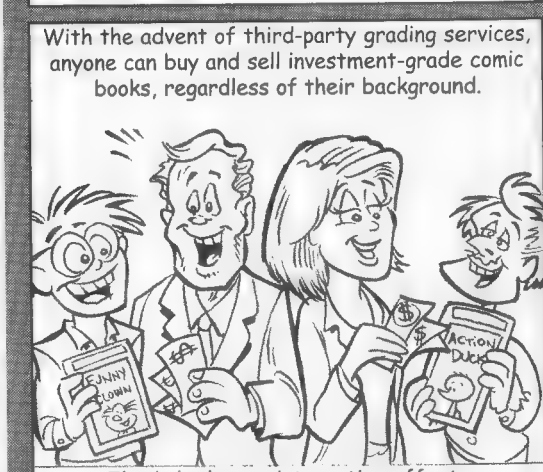
The Basics



But it isn't as crazy as it sounds...



In the past, a lot of people outside the hobby who **might** have been interested in investing in comics avoided them for this reason. You just can't get a college degree in comic-book grading!



That's had some interesting effects. Sales of comic books online have skyrocketed. And people have been willing to pay more for "slabbed" versions of many (but **not** all!) comics, because the grade makes it easier to resell.

Alpha-Astro $

Mary Marvel appears; war stamp cover

Christmas cover

Uncle Marvel

"Monster Society of Evil" serial ends

NM	36 JUN 44	37 JUL 44	38 AUG 44	39 AUG 44	40 OCT 44	41 NOV 44	42 JAN 45	43 FEB 45	44 MAR 45	45 APR 45	46 MAY 45	47 JUL 45	48 AUG 45	49 OCT 45	50 DEC 45
Price	$225	$225	$225	$225	$225	$190	$163	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125

Archaic #3

Archaic is a fantasy comic about an evil king, missing babies, werewolves, magic, knights … pretty much the whole nine yards is here. The evil king needs to get access to this castle, but the magic around it prevents anyone except the people of a certain bloodline from entering. The two missing babies are the only two people left with the proper blood. Additionally, there is a subplot where the werewolves betray the Land of Fairies, which somehow corrupts their magic and sabotages all fairy-related folk.

FENICKX
WRITER:
JAMES S. ABRAMS
ARTIST:
BRETT C. MARTING
Color • 24 Pgs.
$2.99

Brett Marting's art is interesting. At times it is dark and brooding. It's sort of a combination of Mike Mignola and Dan Brereton. The cover was probably my favorite art piece. *Archaic* seems like a weird title for a fantasy comic, but I think this one hits pretty often. The story is epic, but not overly so that I can't follow it. The online website has a dictionary for the new fantasy terms and how to pronounce them. *D&D* players will find a lot of fodder here for their game.

★★★ — **Tony DiGerolamo**

www.archaiccomic.com

UNSLABBED Near Mint

Atom
DC, 1962
1 . . . 750
2 . . . 300
3 . . . 225
4-5 . . . 175
6 . . . 125
7 . . . 250
➥Hawkman app
8 . . . 125
9 . . . 90
10-13 . . . 85
14 . . . 95
➥Hawkman app.
15 . . . 85
16-17 . . . 45
18 . . . 50
19 . . . 45
20 . . . 60
21-23 . . . 35
24 . . . 40
25 . . . 50
26-28 . . . 35
29 . . . 100
30 . . . 55
31 . . . 48
32 . . . 35
33 . . . 40
34-35 . . . 35
36-37 . . . 45
38 . . . 30
Special 1-2 . . . 3

Atom and Hawkman
DC, 1968
39-41 . . . 30
42 . . . 35
43-45 . . . 30

Avengers
MARVEL, 1963
0 . . . 3
1 . . . 4200
➥1st Avengers
1.5 . . . 3
2 . . . 935
3 . . . 750
4 . . . 1450
➥Cap. America joins
4/Golden . . . 40
5 . . . 350
6 . . . 390
7 . . . 460
8 . . . 275
9 . . . 225
➥1st Wonder Man
10 . . . 180
11 . . . 275
➥Spider-Man app.
12 . . . 115
13-14 . . . 150
15 . . . 100
16 . . . 125
17 . . . 115
18 . . . 100
19 . . . 150
20 . . . 80
21-22 . . . 70
23 . . . 75
24 . . . 70
25 . . . 95
26 . . . 65
27 . . . 70
28-30 . . . 50

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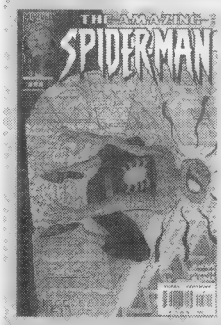
39-41 . . . 40
42 . . . 50
43 . . . 45
44 . . . 40
45 . . . 50
46 . . . 30
47-48 . . . 37
49 . . . 32
50 . . . 30
51 . . . 40
52 . . . 41
53 . . . 60
➥X-Men app.
54-55 . . . 30
56 . . . 50
57 . . . 110
➥1st Vision
58 . . . 65
59-60 . . . 40
61-66 . . . 30
67 . . . 45
68 . . . 27
69-70 . . . 30
71 . . . 50
72-73 . . . 30
74-76 . . . 25
77 . . . 20
78 . . . 25
79-81 . . . 23
82 . . . 26
83 . . . 36
➥1st Valkyrie
84 . . . 23
85-86 . . . 25
87 . . . 40
88 . . . 25
89 . . . 20
90-91 . . . 22
92 . . . 26
93 . . . 120
➥Double-size
94 . . . 35
95 . . . 38
96 . . . 35
97-98 . . . 26
99 . . . 30
100 . . . 55
➥Knight gets sword
101 . . . 18
102 . . . 16
103 . . . 40
➥Sentinels
104 . . . 20
105 . . . 18
106 . . . 17
107 . . . 20
108 . . . 12
109 . . . 18
110 . . . 25
111 . . . 22
112 . . . 25
113 . . . 11
114 . . . 15
115 . . . 13
116 . . . 27
➥Defenders War
117 . . . 20
118 . . . 24
119 . . . 15
120 . . . 14
121 . . . 10
122 . . . 13
123 . . . 9
124 . . . 12
125 . . . 20
126 . . . 18
127-129 . . . 12
130 . . . 15
131 . . . 12

RETROVIEW
Amazing Spider-Man #28 ★★★



"Distractions"

Spider-Man's fight with The Enforcers carries over to the man holding Mary Jane hostage.

The parallels throughout this issue are amazing, with MJ's kidnapper feeling many of the attacks on Spider-Man. Through the magic of Joe Bennett's art, the kidnapper and Peter are even portrayed in similar settings at various points.

Admittedly, this sub-plot goes on far too long, even in comic-book time, but it appears to be headed for a satisfactory conclusion. The biggest complaint is that, again, it crosses over to *Peter Parker, Spider-Man,* and there's little info from that issue here.

Marvel
Apr 2001 • 22 pp.
Writer: Howard Mackie
Pencils: Joe Bennett
Inks: Sandu Florea
Cover: John Romita Jr.

No CGC copies

Then $2.25 NOW $2

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146/30¢ . . . 20
147 . . . 7
147/30¢ . . . 20
148 . . . 12
148/30¢ . . . 18
149 . . . 6
149/30¢ . . . 15
150 . . . 7
150/30¢ . . . 15
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152-155 . . . 6
156 . . . 9
157 . . . 6
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167 . . . 5
168 . . . 7
169-170 . . . 4
171 . . . 6
172-174 . . . 4
175 . . . 5
176-180 . . . 4
181 . . . 5
182 . . . 4
183-184 . . . 6
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186 . . . 5
187-189 . . . 6
190 . . . 4
191-195 . . . 5
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219-224 . . . 2
225 . . . 3

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264-349 . . . 2
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360 . . . 3
361-362 . . . 1
363 . . . 3
364-365 . . . 1
366 . . . 4
➥Foil cover
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369 . . . 3
370-374 . . . 1
375 . . . 2
375/Collector's . . . 3
376-379 . . . 2
379/Double . . . 3
380 . . . 2
380/Double . . . 3
381 . . . 2
381/Double . . . 3
382 . . . 2
382/Double . . . 3
383-399 . . . 2
400 . . . 4
401-402 . . . 3
Ann 1 . . . 125
Ann 2 . . . 120
Ann 3-4 . . . 22
Ann 5 . . . 25
Ann 6 . . . 7
Ann 7 . . . 12
Ann 8-9 . . . 8
Ann 10 . . . 9
Ann 11-16 . . . 4
Ann 17-23 . . . 3

Avengers
MARVEL, 1996
1-1/A . . . 3
2-11 . . . 2
12 . . . 3
13 . . . 2

UNSLABBED Near Mint

Avengers
MARVEL, 1998
0 . . . 2
1 . . . 4
1/Chromium . . . 6
1/RoughCut . . . 4
2-5 . . . 3
6-11 . . . 2
12 . . . 3
12/DF . . . 12
12/White . . . 5
13-16 . . . 2
16/A . . . 4
17-24 . . . 2
25 . . . 3
26 . . . 2
27 . . . 3
28-33 . . . 2
34 . . . 3
35-47 . . . 2
48 . . . 4
49 . . . 2
50 . . . 3
51-80 . . . 2
81-82 . . . 3
83-84 . . . 2
500 . . . 12
➥Disassembled
500/DirCut . . . 18
501 . . . 5
➥Disassembled
502 . . . 7
➥Hawkeye dies
503 . . . 4
Ann '98 . . . 3
Ann '99-'00 . . . 4
Ann '01 . . . 3

Avengers Finale
MARVEL, 2005
1 . . . 4

Avengers Forever
MARVEL, 1998
1 . . . 3

UNSLABBED Near Mint

1/WF . . . 5
2-12 . . . 3

Avengers/JLA
DC, 2003
2 . . . 7
4 . . . 6

Avengers West Coast
MARVEL, 1989
47-55 . . . 1
56 . . . 8
➥Psycho Scarlet Witch
57-74 . . . 1
75 . . . 2
76-102 . . . 1
Ann 4-7 . . . 2
Ann 8 . . . 3

Batgirl
DC, 2000
1 . . . 4
1/2nd . . . 3
2-5 . . . 4
6-73 . . . 3
Ann 1 . . . 4

Batman
DC, 1940
0 . . . 3
1 . . . 80000
➥1st Catwoman
2 . . . 15000
3 . . . 9750
4 . . . 7500
5 . . . 5500
➥1st Batmobile
6-7 . . . 4500
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➥1st Batcave
13-14 . . . 2775

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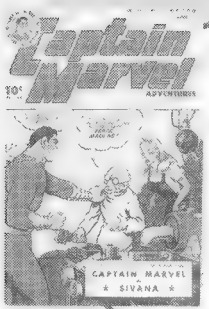


▲ #58

CAPTAIN MARVEL ADVENTURES

Super-villain progeny

A dynasty of heroes faced a dynasty of villians with Captain Marvel battling Dr. Thaddeus Bodog Sivana; Mary Marvel feuding with Sivana's daughter, Georgia (although that's Beautia Sivana in the cover shown); and Captain Marvel Jr. squaring off with Sivana Jr.

image © 1946 Fawcett

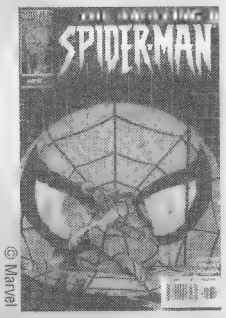
Biweekly issues begin

68 pages

Sivana and Beautia on cover

	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
NM Price	JAN 46 $125	JAN 46 $125	FEB 46 $125	FEB 46 $125	MAR 46 $125	MAR 46 $125	MAR 46 $125	APR 46 $125	APR 46 $125	MAY 46 $125

Amazing Spider-Man #29 ★★★



© Marvel

Marvel
May 2001 • 22 pp.
Writer: Howard Mackie
Pencils: Lee Weeks
Inks: Scott Hanna
Cover: Uncredited

"Mary Jane"

Peter finally tracks down Mary Jane, only to be attacked by her kidnapper.

All the threads of the "Mary Jane is missing and presumed dead" story arc come together here, although the ones that ran in *Peter Parker, Spider-Man* are only lightly touched on. What happened to the gatefold summaries of a few years earlier?

Lee Weeks' art makes the beautiful Ms. Watson-Parker even more lovely in this chapter of the story. Coloring the flashback sequences, which show how MJ's kidnapper got his empathetic connection to Spidey, was inspired.

With the 2001 annual to go, Howard Mackie does a nice job of clearing the set for J. Michael Straczynski next issue.

I've Been Slabbed!

Steve Mortensen, Colossus Comics

"Civil War" has created fertile ground for Marvel; both current titles and back issues have been taking off. One of the sleeper Marvel hits is the "Planet Hulk" story arc in *Incredible Hulk*, which began with #92. Marvel has announced that next year there will be a new story arc titled "World War Hulk" in which The Hulk comes back to Earth — and there's even *speculation* that Hulk will be the one that ends the Civil War.

Amazing Spider-Man has also sold well since #529, which sells for more than $75 in 9.8 and $500 in 9.9. At one time, we owned all three 9.9 copies; we sold them for $300 each during the summer.

DC's *52* series has been in a bit of a slump, but #30 may pick up the title. *Justice* and *Justice League of America* have been great sellers and fun reading, livening up the back-issue market for Golden and Silver Age first appearances.

This month's CGC 9.8 picks:

***Incredible Hulk* #92 1st printing.** Marvel recently announced a new story arc entitled "World War Hulk" that begins in 2007 with *Incredible Hulk* #106. Hulk returns to Earth after being rocketed into space. First printings of #92 are selling north of $30, and I would expect that price to rise considerably, once #106 comes out.

Spider-Man (1980s black costume issues). Spider-Man will return to his black costume in 2007, which would mean a possible increase in value of 1980s black-costume appearances. Some of these include *Amazing Spider-Man* #252-300, *Web of Spider-Man* #1-39, *Marvel Team-Up* #141-146, *Annual* #7, and *Spectacular Spider-Man* #90-137. *Amazing Spider-Man* #252 is selling for around $500 in 9.8, although I think the book may be peaking at this price due to the speculators who have been buying it up before the movie comes out. (Spider-Man wears the black costume in the upcoming movie.)

***52* #30.** Bruce Wayne appears in this issue with Nightwing and Batwoman. The issue has been shrouded in a bit of mystery regarding whether Dick Grayson will don Batman's costume. If that happens, this could be a huge book.

***X-23* #1 (first series).** X-23 has a new mini-series coming out titled *X-23: Target*. It looks to be a little more violent than the previous series, but I think that that edginess will increase her popularity. At least for me, the first issue of the first series was difficult to grade in 9.8, although there are about 245 copies graded 9.8 in the census. Despite the high quantity, the issue seems like a great value to me at $20.

***New Universal* #1.** Marvel and Warren Ellis are bringing back the New Universe. The old series from the '80s was sort of a cult favorite, although the value of these issues didn't reach above cover price. Depending on what they do with this new series, the old back issues might spike up — especially in CGC 9.8. This new series is sort of a sleeper and may be under-printed, since most of Marvel's energy is going into *Civil War*.

***New Avengers: Illuminati* #1 (one-shot; 1st and 2nd printings).** Before "Civil War" began, Marvel released the *New Avengers: Illuminati* one-shot as sort of a prequel. Now, Marvel is creating a mini-series around The Illuminati, and I'd expect the first series will pick up popularity. The first printing is already selling for around $60 in 9.8.

***Steve Mortensen** owns Colossus Comics (**www.colossuscomics.com**), which offers a CGC 9.8 subscription service and CGC 9.8 preorders for new comics, as well as eBay auctions and an extensive online store. He can be reached at **steve@colossuscomics.com**.*

Atom-Batman $

CGC copies Then $2.25 NOW $2

	UNSLABBED Near Mint		UNSLABBED Near Mint		UNSLABBED Near Mint		UNSLABBED Near Mint
15	2625	122	225	201-202	35	332	8
16	4600	123	220	203-204	30	333-352	7
➥1st Alfred		124-126	195	205	40	353	5
17-20	1650	127	240	206	30	354-356	7
21-22	1275	➥vs. Joker		207-208	50	357	9
23	2000	128	195	209-212	30	358-367	7
24	1275	129	250	213	45	368	8
25	2050	➥Robin origin		214-217	30	369-370	6
26-30	1275	130	195	218	70	371-399	5
31-36	950	131	145	➥Giant-size		400	10
37	1200	132-135	130	219	50	401-403	4
38	1000	136	215	220-221	30	404	5
39	950	➥vs. Joker		222	75	405	6
40	1140	137-145	140	223	40	406-408	5
41-43	760	146-147	110	224-226	30	409-416	3
44	1080	148	140	227	50	417	5
45-46	760	➥vs. Joker		228	40	418-420	4
47	3000	149-150	110	229-231	30	421-425	3
➥Batman origin		151	90	232	350	426-427	6
48	965	152	100	➥1st Ra's al Ghul		427/Direct	4
49	1350	153	125	233	30	428	6
➥1st Mad Hatter		154	85	234	115	429	4
50-51	690	155	300	➥1st SA Two-Face		430	3
52	850	➥1st SA Penguin		235	17	431-435	2
53-54	690	156-164	85	236	25	436	3
55	850	165	130	237	75	437-441	2
56-57	690	166-168	85	➥1st Reaper		442	3
58	750	169	90	238	65	443-456	2
59-61	690	170	85	➥100 pages		457	3
62	1250	171	450	239-240	17	457/Direct	4
➥Catwoman orig n		➥1st SA Riddler		241	30	458-486	2
63	575	172	125	242	17	487	1
64	515	173-175	75	243	70	488-492	3
65	575	176	85	➥vs. Ra's al Ghul		492/Silver	5
66	660	177	75	244	65	493	3
➥vs. Joker		178	85	➥vs. Ra's al Ghul		494-496	2
67-68	515	179	120	245	70	497	3
69	575	➥vs. Riddler		246-247	15	498-500	2
70-72	515	180	60	248	20	500/Collector's	4
73	660	181	175	249-250	15	501-515	2
74	550	➥1st Poison Ivy		251	60	515/Variant	4
75-77	500	182-185	60	➥vs. Joker		516-530	2
78	585	186	70	252	14	530/Variant	3
79-80	500	187	65	253	26	531	2
81	485	188	40	254-255	32	531/Variant	3
82-83	435	189	250	256-258	35	532	2
84	485	➥1st SA Scarecrow		259-261	32	532/Variant	3
85-90	435	190	45	262-263	15	533-535	2
91-99	400	191	40	264-266	9	535/Variant	4
100	2000	192	60	267-285	8	536-549	2
➥Anniversary issue		193	70	286	12	550	3
101-104	400	194	80	➥vs. Joker		550/Variant	4
105	490	195-196	40	287-290	9	551-562	2
106-109	400	197	100	291	12	563-564	3
110	425	➥Catwoman app		292-294	9	565-599	2
111-120	290	198	85	295-299	8		
121	375	199	40	300	15		
		200	100	301-331	7		
		➥Robin origin					

Mary appears — Marvel Atomic war cover — Flashback issue — Christmas story — Lts. Marvel appear — Photo cover

NM Price	61 MAY 46 $125	62 JUN 46 $125	63 JUL 46 $125	64 AUG 46 $125	65 SEP 46 $125	66 OCT 46 $125	67 NOV 46 $125	68 DEC 46 $125	69 FEB 47 $125	70 MAR 47 $125	71 APR 47 $125	72 MAY 47 $125	73 JUN 47 $125	74 JUL 47 $125	75 AUG 47 $125

Battle Vixens
Vol. 8

The bloody bouts between rival high-schoolers punch onward, as the feisty teen-ager Hakufu battles against other "Toushi," who have inherited jewels that contain the spiritual reincarnations of ancient Chinese warriors. Facing a murderers' row of street toughs and gang leaders, can she and her boyfriend, Koukin, ally themselves with the right crew?

TOKYOPOP
WRITERS:
YUJI SHIOZAKI, KEITH GIFFEN
ARTIST:
YUJI SHIOZAKI
B/W • 176 Pgs.
$9.99

In this volume, Hakufu is targeted for elimination again by the vengeful, deranged Kannei. Luckily for her, the smooth Saji Genpou intervenes. But, as other assassination orders are being executed, who will protect Hakufu and Koukin, when they are attacked again by the long-haired Toutotsu and his stick-wielding Ugan clan?

Yuji Shiozaki displays an attractive mastery of action, perspective, and the human form, but Keith Giffen's translation dwells in the gutter of potty mouths and bodily functions. This series continues to use its script as a convenient excuse to depict busty maidens in various states of distress and undress.

★★ **— Oliver Chin**

www.tokyopop.com

UNSLABBED Near Mint

Batman CONTINUED
600. 4
601-607 2
608. 5
➥Jim Lee begins
609. 4
610-619/2nd . . 3
620-629 2
630. 3
631-632 2
633. 3
634. 6
635. 15
➥Red Hood
636-637 12
638. 11
638/2nd 6
639. 16
640-641 6
642-643 3
644. 2
645-650 3
651. 6
652-657 3
1000000. 4
Ann 1 540
Ann 2 275
Ann 3 215
Ann 4-5 110
Ann 6-7 85
Ann 8 7
Ann 9-11 6
Ann 12-13 5
Ann 14-15 3
Ann 15/Silver. . . 4
Ann 16-18 3
Ann 19 4
Ann 20 3
Ann 21 4
Ann 22-23 3
Ann 24 4
Ann 25 12
GS 1-3 6

Battlestar Galactica
MARVEL, 1979
1. 4
4-10 3
11-23 2

Beatles
DELL, 1964
1. 440

Beowulf
DC, 1975
1. 5
2. 3
3-6 2

Beware (Trojan)
TROJAN, 1953
13 (1). 400
14 (2). 250
15 (3)-16 (4) 200
5-13 175
14-15 150

Beware
MARVEL, 1973
1. 8
2-8 5

UNSLABBED Near Mint

Beware the Creeper
DC, 1968
1. 45
2-5 32
6. 55

Big All-American Comic Book
DC, 1944
1. 6500

Bionic Woman
CHARLTON, 1977
1. 14
2-5 6

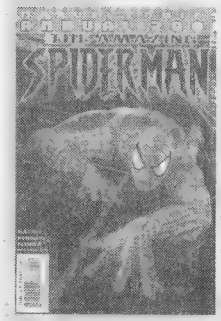
Birds of Prey
DC, 1999
1. 4
2-7 3
8. 12
➥Nightwing app
9-75 3
76. 15
➥1st Black Alice
77-98 3

Black Goliath
MARVEL, 1976
1. 11
2. 5
2/30¢ 20
3. 4
3/30¢ 20
4. 4
4/30¢ 20
5. 4

Blackhawk
DC, 1944
9. 2600
10. 1100
11. 900
12-15 800
16-20 525
21-25 460
26-30 400
31-35 350
36-40 300
41-49 225
50. 200
51-60 165
61-70 145
71. 200
72-80 130
81-86 125
87-92 120
93. 135
94-99 110
100. 140
101-107 105
108. 325
➥1st DC issue
109. 130
110-117 110
118. 135
119-130 85
131-140 65
141-149 50
150-163 48
164. 60
165-166 48
167-180 22
181-200 16
201-227 15
228. 30
229-243 15
244-260 4
261-273 3

Blitzkrieg
DC, 1976
1. 16

Amaz. Spider-Man 2001 ★★1/2



Marvel
2001 • 33 pp.
Writer: Howard Mackie
Pencils: Joe Bennett
Inks: Sandu Florea
Cover: Uncredited

"Passages"

In the midst of attempting to put their lives back together after her kidnapping, Peter and Mary Jane realize they've grown apart.

Howard Mackie says farewell to his run on *Amazing Spider-Man* with this "slice of life" story that serves as an epilogue of sorts to the long-running sub-plot. It's questionable how many readers identified with it, but Marvel Editor in Chief Joe Quesada has wondered how many readers identify with a married Wallcrawler in the first place, and this appears to be a forced step toward dissolving that marriage. Thankfully, it's now five years later, and it still hasn't happened.

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UNSLABBED Near Mint

2. 8
3-5 6

Bomba
DC, 1967
1. 16
2-7 8

Bone
CARTOON BOOKS, 1991
1. 80
2. 45
3. 25
4. 16
5. 12
6-8 7
9-13 5
13.5/Gold 4
14-55 3
Special 1 2

Boy Comics
LEV GLEASON, 1942
3. 1500
4. 1100
5. 575
6. 950
➥Iron Jaw origin
7. 620
8. 515
9. 450
10. 615
11-14 350
15. 400
16. 225
17. 250
18-20 200
21-25 140
26-29 130
30. 200
➥Crimebuster origin
31-40 58
41-50 42
51-62 30
63-80 27
81-100 24
101-119 22

Boy Commandos
DC, 1942
1. 4500
2. 1500
3. 1000
4-6 500

UNSLABBED Near Mint

7-10 275
11-22 190
23. 220
24-30 150
31-35 135
36. 195

Brave and the Bold
DC, 1955
1. 3000
2. 1500
3. 700
4-5 650
6-10 500
11-22 400
23. 500
24. 350
25. 500
➥1st Suicide Squad
26. 325
27. 330
28. 5000
➥1st JLA
29. 2000
30. 1750
31. 350
32-33 200
34. 1750
➥1st SA Hawkman
35-36 400
37. 250
38-39 225
40-41 140
42. 300
43. 350
➥Hawkman origin
44. 260
45-49 60
50. 175
51. 225
52. 125
53. 75
54. 350
➥1st Teen Titans
55-56 45
57. 150
➥1st Metamorpho
58. 65
59. 80
60. 100
➥1st Wonder Girl
61. 125
➥Starman origin
62. 100
➥1st SA Wildcat
63. 40
64. 60

UNSLABBED Near Mint

65-66 22
67. 65
➥Batman starts
68. 80
➥Batman Hulk parody
69-73 50
74. 40
75. 60
76. 50
77-78 40
79. 75
➥Batman, Deadman
80-82 50
83. 60
84. 50
85. 60
➥N. Adams GA
86. 50
87. 26
88-90 20
91-92 18
93. 30
94. 18
95. 24
96-98 15
99. 22
100. 30
101-102 15
103-110 12
111-114 18
115. 22
116-118 18
119-126 7
127-128 6
129-130 11
131. 6
132. 4
133. 5
134-140 4
141. 10
142-179 4
180-190 3
191. 8
192-196 3
197. 4
198-199 3
200. 7
Ann 1 6

Caliber Presents
CALIBER, 1989
1. 15
➥1st Crow
2-7 3
8. 2
9-24 3

UNSLABBED Near Mint

Captain Action
DC, 1968
1. 45
2-4 35
5. 20

Captain America
MARVEL, 1968
100. 210
101. 55
102-108 35
109. 45
➥Origin retold
110. 75
➥Steranko begins
111. 65
112. 50
113. 60
➥Avengers app
114-116 30
117. 95
➥1st Falcon
118-124 25
125-127 20
128-130 15
131-132 18
133. 15
134-136 18
137. 35
138. 30
139-146 25
147. 18
148. 16
149. 15
150. 25
151-153 15
154-155 25
156. 20
157-162 10
163-164 12
165-167 10
168. 15
169. 10
170. 12
171-172 10
173. 15
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175-176 10
177-183 8
184-187 5
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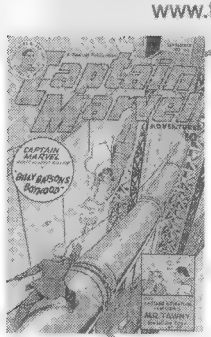
197. 5
197/30¢ 20



▲ #88

CAPTAIN MARVEL ADVENTURES

Origins galore

As *Captain Marvel Adventures* entered the later 1940s, backstories for several characters were established, including Mr. Tawny, the talking tiger, and Billy Batson himself. Portions of that latter story were updated in Jerry Ordway's *Power of Shazam.*

Image © 1947 Fawcett

THE BOTTOM LINE

	Origin of Mr. Atom	Origin of Mr. Tawny	Cap's origin retold	Mr. Atom appears	Infinity cover					
	76 SEP 47	77 OCT 47	78 NOV 47	79 DEC 47	80 JAN 48	81 FEB 48	82 MAR 48	83 APR 48	84 MAY 48	85 JUN 48
NM Price	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125

RETROVIEW

Amazing Spider-Man #30 (471) ★★★★

© Marvel

Marvel
Jun 2001 • 22 pp.
Writer: J. Michael Straczynski
Pencils: John Romita Jr.
Inks: Scott Hanna
Cover: J. Scott Campbell

"Transformations, Literal & Otherwise"

While settling into this new life sans Mary Jane, Peter meets a man with powers similar to his own, who asks Peter how he got his spider-powers.

J. Michael Straczynski kicks off his run in grand style by establishing that Peter and Mary Jane may have separated, but Peter isn't destitute or out on the street. The seeds for several sub-plots are planted here and will bear fruit over the next several months and years.

Ezekiel, a man who reminds Peter of Uncle Ben, is a great character, especially with the questions he raises about Spider-Man's origins.

Then $2.25 NOW $5

Price guides

UNSLABBED Near Mint

198 6
198/30¢ 20
199 5
199/30¢ 20
200 6
200/30¢ 20
201 6
202 4
203 5
204-205 4
206 5
207 4
208-209 5
210 4
210/35¢ 15
211 4
211/35¢ 15
212 4
212/35¢ 15
213 4
213/35¢ 15
214 4
214/35¢ 15
215-233 4
234 6
235-240 4
241 8
242-255 4
256-271 2
272 3
273-275 2
276 4
277-281 2
282 3
283 2
284 3
285 2
286-288 3
289-297 2
298 3
299-331 2
332 3
333-349 2
350 3
351-382 2
383 3
384-399 2
400 3
401-420 2
420/Collector's . . . 3
421-424 2
425 3
425/Variant 4
426-443 2
444 3
445-447 2
448 3
449-454 2
Ann 1 35
Ann 2 20
Ann 3-4 8
Ann 5-7 3
Ann 8 12
➥Wolverine app.
Ann 9-13 3
Ashcan 1 1
Special 1-2 4

Captain America
MARVEL, 1995
1 3
1/Flag 4
1/Conv. 5
2-13 2
Ashcan 1 1

Captain America
MARVEL, 1998
1 4
1/Sunburst 5
2 3
2/Variant 4
3-12 2
12/Ltd. 6
13-24 2
25 3
26-49 2
50 6
Ann '98-'01 . . . 4

Captain America
MARVEL, 2002
1 4
2-32 3

Captain America
MARVEL, 2005
1 8
2-3 5
4-5 3
6 7
6/Variant 5
7 3
8 5
9-22 3

Captain America & The Falcon
MARVEL, 2004
1-5 3
6 4
7-14 3

Captain America Comics
MARVEL, 1941
1 80000
2 20000
3 10000
4 6500
5 5500
6 4750
7 5500
8 4000
9-10 3600
11-12 3100
13 3275
14-15 3100
16 3600
17 2585
18-20 2075
21-22 1850
22/A 12000
➥GS issue
23-25 1850
26-30 1650
31-35 1385
36 1650
37 1550
38-40 1285
41-58 1175
59 2650
➥Cap origin
60 1175
61 1850
62-65 1075
66 1400
67-70 1175
71-73 1025
74 4350
➥Cap Weird Tales
75 2750
76-78 875

Captain Atom
CHARLTON, 1965
78 40
79-85 25
86-89 20

Captain Marvel
MARVEL, 1968
1 60
2-3 18
4 24
5 15
6 30
7-8 15
9 25
10-15 15
16 25
17-24 22
➥Thanos War starts
25-27 25
28 30
29 16
30 12
31 16
32-33 12
34 6
35-37 3
38 5
39-44 3
44/30¢ 20
45 3
45/30¢ 20
46-47 3
48 9
49 3
50 10
51 4
52 3
52/35¢ 15
53-54 3
55 5
56 3
57 6
58-62 3

Captain Marvel Adventures
FAWCETT, 1941
1 27500
2 3500
3 1800
4 1200
5 1050
6-7 750
8-10 675
11-15 590
16-17 550
18 1800
➥1st Mary Marvel
19-20 500

CBG Trendwatcher

Michael Tierney, Collector's Edition

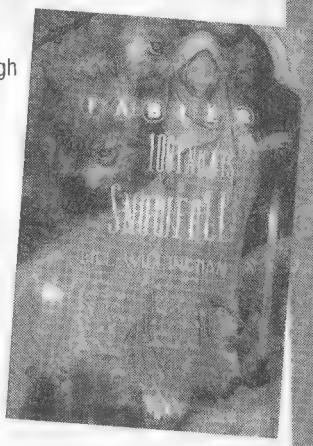
It's to be hoped that the sales decline that started in July finally bottomed out in October. Despite strong initial orders, late-shipping books and the lack of an event book killed sales this month. For the first time this year, sales did not meet or exceed the previous year. In fact, they didn't even come close. It was the worst month of the year by a wide margin.

The Retail Detail about selling comics is that we are an *entertainment industry*. Without event books, like those released over the last few years, competition from other venues takes the consumer's entertainment dollar away during the lean months of autumn.

This time of year is usually whammy time for my market. September sees tight budgets because of school startup, and October has personal property taxes come due, along with a fortnight of competition, when the State Fair hits Little Rock. During the *Infinite Crisis* lead-up and subsequent run, customers had special interests drawing them into my stores, which reversed that pattern. Moreover, bad weather and poor ad campaigns had hurt the State Fair's attendance in recent years.

This year, the fair promoters improved the ads, the weather was good, and turnout was big. Where normally my Little Rock store benefits and my North Little Rock store suffers from the fair's attendance, this year it was reversed. North Little Rock sailed through it and Little Rock was hammered.

If *Civil War* #5 had shipped, things would have been different. I couldn't count the number of customers who came in, confirmed that *Civil War* and its tie-ins were delayed, and then turned and walked away … empty-handed. The rising tide raises all ships, but the receding tide lowers them. Even DC's *52* series saw the biggest drop-off in interest that I've seen through the first half of its year-long run.



Elsewhere for DC, declining Superman sales were slowed by the arrival of *Superman: The Movie* director Richard Donner on *Action Comics*, which spurred additional interest. And the undisputed top-selling graphic novel of the month was *Fables: 1001 Nights of Snowfall*. Thanks to this release and the strong performance of *Jack of Fables*, the *Fables* comics and graphic novels continue to see heightened interest.

Fables is the new *Sandman*.

Key Sales (all unslabbed):

Action Comics #300 FN $35
Amazing Spider-Man #58 VG- $23
Amazing Spider-Man #181 VF- $12
Amazing Spider-Man Annual #21 NM- $12
Fantastic Four #37 GD+ $28.50
Silver Surfer (Vol. 1) #1 GD $39
Strange Adventures #116 VG- $18
Wolverine: Origin #3 NM- $12

House Picks

Appreciating Avengers

1. ***Avengers: Illuminati* #1**
2. ***Marvel Masterworks Avengers* Vol. 1**
3. ***Avengers: Kree-Skrull War***
4. ***Avengers* (Vol. 1) #100**
5. ***Marvel Adventures: The Avengers* #1**

Michael Tierney *runs* ***Collector's Edition*** *in North Little Rock and* ***The Comic Book Store*** *in Little Rock, Ark. He can be reached at* ***cbsrock@swbell.net*** *or* ***(501) 791-4222.***

Batman-Captain S

Mr. Tawny appears

Billy Batson's boyhood

Artist's hand on cover

Cap's origin retold

	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100
NM	JUL 48	AUG 48	SEP 48	OCT 48	NOV 48	DEC 48	JAN 49	FEB 49	MAR 49	APR 49	MAY 49	JUN 49	JUL 49	AUG 49	SEP 49
Price	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125

Cheated!

As a comic book, *Cheated!* is marvelous propaganda. The story recounts the controversy following alleged abuses in the Ohio voting system during the 2004 election. It's about as unbiased as a Michael Moore documentary, and the message is simple: Republicans are evil.

WAKE UP
WRITER:
SHERI LEIGH MYERS
ARTIST:
SOPHIE GOLDSTEIN
B/W • 64 Pgs.
$10

This criticism has nothing to do with politics. The volume is just not entertaining, so one-sided as to be uninteresting. If one is really into this issue, this may be a wonderful resource to educate people, but it's essentially an editorial in graphic form. Issues such as this *can* be discussed in a more entertaining fashion. *Birth of a Nation*, for example, addresses nearly identical themes and, even if the reader disagrees with the authors' politics, the volume can be enjoyed and discussed. *Cheated!* lacks subtlety as well as shading.

The art is unpolished, but characters are consistent and public figures are easily recognizable, which is not always the case in such efforts. The extensive endnotes are useful for those who wish to learn more about this subject.

★½ — Jack Abramowitz

www.wakeupandsaveyourcountry.com

ISBN: 0-9789352-0-9

#104

CAPTAIN MARVEL ADVENTURES

Captain Tawny?

The cover of *Captain Marvel Adventures* #104 shows Mr. Tawny, the talking tiger, wearing a Captain Marvel costume. That makes Sterling Morris, the owner of WHIZ radio, just about the only supporting character who *didn't* don one.

Image © 1950 Fawcett

UNSLABBED Near Mint

Captain Marvel Adventures CONTINUED
21-22 400
23 610
➥1st Mr. Mind
24-40 225
41 190
42 163
43-109 125
110-120 80
121 115
➥Cap Marvel origin
122-150 80

Captain Marvel Jr. FAWCETT, 1942
1 4000
2 1500
3 865
4 915
5 735
6-8 545
9-10 500
11-15 390
16-20 340
21-25 275
26-30 235
31-40 205
41-50 180
51-70 155
71-80 135
81-119 120

Capt. Storm DC, 1964
1 28
2-5 18
6 14
7-15 12
16-18 9

Cat MARVEL, 1972
1 35
2 15
3 12
4 10

Catwoman DC, 1989
1-2 3
3-4 2

Catwoman DC, 1993
0 2
1-10 3
11-50 2
50/A-50/B 3
51-94 2
1000000 3
Ann 1-2 4
Ann 3-4 4

Catwoman DC, 2002
1 4
2-59 3

UNSLABBED Near Mint

Cerebus the Aardvark AARDVARK-VANAHEIM, 1977
0 4
0/Gold 6
1 700
1/Counterfeit . . . 60
2 150
3 90
4 75
5 50
6 35
7 20
8-10 15
11 12
12-22 10
23-31 6
32-40 5
41-50 4
51 6
52-57 4
58-60 3
61-62 4
63-100 3
101-299 2
300 4

Challengers of the Unknown DC, 1958
1 1450
2 375
3-8 220
9-10 140
11-15 90
16-23 52
24-31 25
32-49 20
50-56 15
57-69 11
70-73 7
74 14
➥Adams art, Deadman
75-80 7
81 6
82-87 5

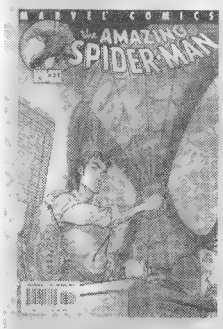
Chamber of Chills HARVEY, 1951
1 350
2-4 275
5-9 250
10-19 225
20-25 200
26 175

Chamber of Chills MARVEL, 1972
1 25
2-10 15
11-22 12
22/30¢ 20
23 12
23/30¢ 20
24-25 12

Champions MARVEL, 1975
1 15
2-3 6
4-5 5
5/30¢ 20
6 4
6/30¢ 20
7 4
7/30¢ 20
8-14 4
14/35¢ 15
15 4
15/35¢ 15
16-17 4

RETROVIEW

Amazing Spider-Man #31 (472) ★★★



Marvel
Jul 2001 • 22 pp
Writer: J. Michael Straczynski
Pencils: John Romita Jr.
Inks: Scott Hanna
Cover: J. Scott Campbell

"Coming Home"

Peter prevents a shooting at his old high school while applying for a teaching position.

It's great to see J. Michael Straczynski delving into Peter's past, both from the super-hero angle and the personal life angle, but where are the continuity cops? In each of his first two issues, we've seen a reference to Gwen Stacy, whom Peter didn't meet until they were in college. Perhaps it isn't Straczynski's fault, but Editor Axel Alonso should have caught that gaffe.

Straczynski does a great job taking real-world events and shaping them to Spidey's world.

© Marvel

CGC copies **Then $2.25 NOW $3**

UNSLABBED Near Mint

Civil War MARVEL, 2006
1 10
2 7
2/Variant 4
3-4/Variant 3

Civil War: Front Line MARVEL, 2006
1-6 3

Civil War: X-Men MARVEL, 2006
1-3 3

Conan DARK HORSE, 2004
0 4
1 10
1/2nd 3
2 5
2/2nd-31 3

Conan the Barbarian MARVEL, 1970
1 160
➥1st comics Conan
2 55
3 72
4 26
5 30
6-7 26
8 30
9 20
➥Giant-size
10-11 35
➥Giant-size
12 15
13-14 20
15 17
16 20
17 17
18 20
19 17
20 27
➥1st Red Sonja
21-24 20
25 10
26-30 8
31-35 7
36-38 9
39-47 7
48-50 6
51-61 5

UNSLABBED Near Mint

61/30¢ 20
62 5
62/30¢ 20
63 5
63/30¢ 20
64 5
64/30¢ 20
65 5
65/30¢ 20
66-75 5
75/35¢ 15
76 5
76/35¢ 15
77 5
77/35¢ 15
78 5
78/35¢ 15
79 5
79/35¢ 15
80-93 5
94-99 4
100 6
101-274 2
275 3
Ann 1 10
Ann 2-3 6
Ann 4-12 2
Special 1 3

Creatures on the Loose MARVEL, 1971
10 50
➥1st Kull; Wrightson
11-15 15
16-22 10
23-26 6
27-29 5
30 25
➥Man-Wolf
31 12
32-36 8
37 12
King Size 1 . . . 10

Crime Suspen-Stories E.C., 1950
1 800
1/A 1000
➥#1 marked out
2 475
3-5 315
6-10 235

UNSLABBED Near Mint

11-12 185
13 210
14-15 185
16 190
17 235
18-19 170
20 215
21 115
22-23 145
24-27 115

Crisis on Infinite Earths DC, 1985
1 5
2-3 4
4 3
5 5
6 3
7-8 5
9-12 3

Crypt of Shadows MARVEL, 1973
1 35
2 16
3 15
4-5 12
6-14 10
15-21 8

Danger Trail DC, 1950
1 875
2 600
3 1250
➥Scarce
4-5 385

Daredevil MARVEL, 1964
-1 2
1 3000
➥1st Daredevil
2 750
3 550
4 400
5 300
6 225
7 675
➥1st red costume
8-10 135
11-15 85
➥Spider-Man app.
16-17 120
➥Spider-Man app.

UNSLABBED Near Mint

18 70
➥1st Gladiator
19 60
20 55
21-27 50
28-30 45
31-42 40
43 45
44-49 30
50-52 33
53-71 20
72-80 17
81 25
➥Giant-size
82-83 17
84-99 14
100 30
➥Origin recap
101-130 8
131 75
➥1st Bullseye
132 15
132/30¢ 20
133 6
133/30¢ 20
134 6
134/30¢ 20
135 6
135/30¢ 20
136 6
136/30¢ 20
137-146 6
146/35¢ 15
147 6
147/35¢ 15
148 6
148/35¢ 15
149-157 6
158 50
➥Frank Miller starts
159 22
160-161 17
162 9
163 18
164-167 11
168 75
➥1st Elektra
169 16
170 10
171 12
172-177 7
178-180 6
181 15
➥Elektra dies
182-183 7
184 6
185 5

Mr. Tawny gets Shazam powers — Cap in space — At Half-Century Fair

	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110
	OCT 49	NOV 49	DEC 49	JAN 50	FEB 50	MAR 50	APR 50	MAY 50	JUN 50	JUL 50
NM Price	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$125	$80

Amazing Spider-Man #32 (473) ★★★★

© Marvel

Marvel
Aug 2001 • 23 pp.
Writer: J. Michael Straczynski
Pencils: John Romita Jr.
Inks: Scott Hanna
Cover: J. Scott Campbell

"The Long, Dark Pizza of the Soul"

Ezekiel's origins are touched on, while he and Peter analyze Spider-Man's rogues' gallery.

J. Michael Straczynski's sequence in which Ezekiel links Spider-Man's foes to totemic archetypes almost reads like literary criticism, but it works without getting bogged down with symbolism and allegories.

Spider-Man's latest enemy, Morlun, is mysterious and fascinating. Is he a power vampire or something more? All will be revealed in coming issues, and this looks to be among Spider-Man's better story arcs. If nothing else, it shakes up the status quo and makes readers actually *think* about their favorite hero.

CGC copy: 9.6 — Then $2.25 NOW $4

UNSLABBED Near Mint

186. 6
187-190 5
191. 6
192-195 3
196. 6
197-204 3
205. 4
206-226 3
227. 4
➥FM Born Again
228-247 3
248-249 4
250. 3
251. 5
252. 4
253. 3
254. 6
➥1st Typhoid Mary
255-257 3
258. 4
259-295 3
296-299 2
300. 3
301-303 2
304. 3
305-311 2
312. 3
313-318 2
319. 5
320-321 2
321/Variant 3
322-324 2
325. 3
326-349 2
350. 3
350/Variant 4
351-374 2
375. 3
376-379 2
380. 3
Ann 1 50
Ann 2-3 9
Ann 4 8
Ann 5 4
Ann 6-10 3
Ann 1997 4

Daredevil
MARVEL, 1998
1/2 5
1. 7
1/Ltd. 50
1/Variant 9
2/A-2/B 5
3-5 4
5/A 5

UNSLABBED Near Mint

6-15 3
16. 5
16/Unlimited 6
17. 3
17/Unlimited 5
➥Newsstand variant
18-20 3
20/Unlimited 5
21. 3
21/Unlimited 5
22. 3
22/Unlimited 5
23. 3
23/Unlimited 5
24-36 3
36/No # 5
➥Newsstand; no #
37. 3
37/Unlimited 5
➥Newsstand variant
37/No # 4
➥Newsstand; no #
38-56 3
57. 4
58-64 3
65. 4
66-89 3

Dark Horse Presents
DARK HORSE, 1986
1. 4
2-4 3
5-9 2
10-16 3
17. 2
18. 3
19-23 2
24. 6
➥1st comics Aliens
25-27 2
28. 3
29-31 2
32. 4
➥Concrete app.
33-35 3
36. 4
36/A 3
37-39 2
40. 3
41-49 2
50. 3
51. 4
➥2nd Sin City
52-53 3
54. 4
55. 2

UNSLABBED Near Mint

56-57 4
58. 2
59-61 3
62. 4
➥All Sin City
63-66 3
67. 4
68-134 3
135. 4
136-149 3
150. 5
151-157 3
Ann '97-'00 5

DC Comics Presents
DC, 1978
1. 9
2. 7
3. 4
4-5 2
6. 6
7-9 2
9/Whitman 6
10-25 2
26. 14
➥1st New Teen Titans
27. 3
28-41 2
42-43 1
44. 2
45-46 1
47. 17
➥1st Masters Universe
48-50 1
51. 6
52. 3
53-71 1
72. 2
73-76 1
77-78 3
79-84 1
85. 6
➥Moore Swamp Thing
86-92 1
93. 2
94-97 1
Ann 1-Ann 4 . . . 3

DC 100 Page Super Spectacular
DC, 1971
4. 175
5. 350
➥Scarce

UNSLABBED Near Mint

6. 150
7. 60
8-9 75
10-13 60
14-17 45
18. 30
19. 24
20. 35
21-22 22

DC Special
DC, 1968
1. 60
2. 50
3. 35
4. 25
5-14 20
15. 16
16-28 10
29. 12

DC Special Blue Ribbon Digest
DC, 1980
1. 5
2-5 4
6-17 3
18. 4
19. 3
20. 7
21-23 3

DC Special Series
DC, 1977
1. 10
2-5 7
6-8 6
9. 16
10-14 6
15. 8
16. 20
➥Jonah Hex dies
17-18 5
19-20 6
21. 12
➥1st Miller Batman
22-26 6
27. 18

Dead@17
VIPER, 2003
0. 27
1. 35
2. 22
3. 10
4. 7

UNSLABBED Near Mint

Deadly Hands of Kung Fu
MARVEL, 1974
1. 30
2. 8
3-5 6
6-10 5
11-19 4
20. 7
21-30 3
31. 6
32-33 3
Special 1 4

Dead of Night
MARVEL, 1973
1. 35
2. 12
3-10 8
11. 16

Defenders
MARVEL, 1972
1. 90
2. 35
3. 30
4-5 26
6-7 16
8. 25
9. 16
10. 55
➥Avengers War
11. 15
12-13 9
14-16 10
17-20 7
21-24 6
25-29 7
30-33 4
34. 5
34/30¢ 20
35. 5
35/30¢ 20
36. 5
36/30¢ 20
37. 5
37/30¢ 20
38-38/30¢ 5
39-47 4
48. 5
48/35¢ 15
49. 4
49/35¢ 15
50. 4
50/35¢ 15
51. 4
51/35¢ 15
52. 4
52/35¢ 15
53-62 4
63. 5
64-92 4
93-100 3
101-152 2
Ann 1 12

Demon
DC, 1972
1. 30
2. 12
3-4 10
5-9 9
10-11 7
12-13 10
14-16 7

Detective Comics
DC, 206
0. 3
1. 80000

Original Art

from ANNIE & SANDY and WINIFRED and HAROLD GRAY SOUTHPORT • • • • CONN

Collecting comic holiday cards

Like most families, we display the holiday cards we receive. Hung around the fireplace are the usual holiday images of snow, Santa Claus, Menorahs, and crèche scenes. Alongside are cards featuring super-heroes, zombies in Santa Claus suits, and other cards, all from various artists and writers.

Artists creating their own holiday cards are part of a tradition dating back to the earliest comic strips. Produced in small private runs, such cards have become quite collectible, since they feature major comics artists' art that has often not been reproduced elsewhere. The cards produced by the more affluent strip artists are often the most elaborate. The Little Orphan Annie shown here is not only full color, but printed on silver-flecked fancy card stock.

While less elaborate, many cards from Golden and Silver Age artists are scarcer and more valuable — especially if they feature super-heroes or other characters the sender created. Most of these artists had far more limited budgets and often far smaller mailing lists, resulting in far fewer surviving cards.

When collecting holiday cards, you will find it important to realize that there were also comics-related cards produced in far larger volume for the commercial market and sold in stores. These are worth less than the cards produced for the artist's own use. They are easily identified because they lack the artist's personal greeting or signature.

— George Hagenauer

Feud with Mr. Tawny — Flying saucer issue — Fights invisible foe — Cap's origin retold — Atomic fire — Dinosaur cover

	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120	121	122	123	124	125
NM	AUG 50	SEP 50	OCT 50	NOV 50	DEC 50	JAN 51	FEB 51	MAR 51	APR 51	MAY 51	JUN 51	JUL 51	AUG 51	SEP 51	OCT 51
Price	$80	$80	$80	$80	$80	$80	$80	$80	$80	$80	$115	$80	$80	$80	$80

Death Jam
Vol. 1

Imagine Yu-Gi-Oh with goggles, samurai swords which double as pistols, and a motorbike, and you get Ssowori — a metropolitan mercenary. Unfortunately, he is operating without a license, so the bandana-wearing Muchaca Smooth is assigned the task of assassinating this renegade.

TOKYOPOP
WRITER:
JEON SANG YOUNG
ARTIST:
JEON SANG YOUNG
B/W • 192 Pgs.
$9.99

However, his prey is elusive, though Ssowori is destined to encounter trouble at every turn.

Translated from the Korean *manhwa*, Seoul is transformed into "Soul City," cloned from New York hip-hop and urban decay. Brashly reeking of foul language and sociopathic characters, surely this creation celebrates jamming on mass murder and sado-masochism. Though some quarters may consider such badness "cool," the overall effect is numbing desensitization to senseless violence and the sinking feeling that this series still has further depths to plumb.

★½ **— Oliver Chin**

www.tokyopop.com

ISBN: 1-59532-531-x

	UNSLABBED Near Mint	UNSLABBED Near Mint
Detective Comics CONTINUED		➥Penguin app.
2	18250	121 600
3	10800	122 1225
4-5	6850	123 600
6-7	4450	124 800
8	6500	125-127 600
9-17	4350	128 800
18	5000	129-130 600
19	4150	131-136 525
20	6300	137 675
21	3250	138 925
22	3950	➥Robotman origin
23-26	3250	139 500
27	225000	140 4000
➥1st Batman		➥1st Riddler
27/2nd	9	141 575
28	25000	142 1250
➥2nd Batman		➥2nd Riddler
29	35000	143-148 575
➥3rd Batman		149 675
30	7500	150 550
31	27500	151 600
32	6000	152-155 525
33	50000	156 625
➥Batman origin		157-160 500
34	7500	161-167 525
35	10000	168 3750
36-37	6500	➥Joker origin
38	57500	169-170 500
➥1st Robin		171 700
39	6000	172-176 500
40	6500	177-179 400
41	4000	180 450
42-45	3000	181-186 400
46-50	2000	187 425
51-57	1750	188-189 400
58	4750	190 600
➥1st Penguin		191-192 400
59	2000	193 450
60	1750	194-199 400
61	1500	200 575
62	2250	201-202 400
63	1750	203 450
64	5000	204 400
➥1st Boy Commandos		205 575
65	2250	206-210 400
66	4000	211 450
➥1st Two-Face		212 400
67	2000	213 525
68-69	1750	214-224 375
70-71	1500	225 4500
72-75	1250	➥1st Manhunter
76	1500	226 1500
77-79	1000	227-229 500
80	1250	230 550
81-83	1000	231 400
84	900	232 300
85	1250	233 1250
86-90	900	➥1st Batwoman
91	1000	234 325
92-98	800	235 600
99	950	236 350
100	1000	237-240 300
101	700	241-260 250
102	950	261-264 200
103-108	625	265 825
109	850	266 200
110-113	625	267 250
114	800	268-271 200
115-117	625	272 175
118	825	273 200
119	600	274-280 150
120	800	281-297 125
		298 200
		299-310 100
		311 200
		➥1st Catman
		312-326 100
		327 225
		➥New Bat symbol
		328 175
		➥Alfred dies
		329-330 75
		331 65
		332 115
		➥Joker
		333-340 60
		341 75

#136

CAPTAIN MARVEL ADVENTURES

Horrific adventures

As the series wound down in the early 1950s, Captain Marvel's adventures, while still whimsical, began to have horror elements added to them, including witches' curses, creeping horrors, and the like. A few might not have passed the (later) Comics Code.

image © 1952 Fawcett

RETROVIEW
Amazing Spider-Man #33 (474) ★★★★

"All Fall Down"

After tracking him for several issues, Morlun attacks Spider-Man, who learns that Ezekiel can't help him.

J. Michael Straczynski has been building toward this battle for the past three issues, and now it's here. Long-time fans will enjoy the knock-down, drag-out aspects of the fight coupled with the moments that show Spidey's compassionate side.

John Romita Jr.'s art is, as always, exemplary, and the consequences of the battle, from destroyed property to Spider-Man's ripped costume, add to the impact of the fight.

And just a quick word about J. Scott Campbell's covers: Outstanding!

Marvel
Sep 2001 • 22 pp.
Writer: J. Michael Straczynski
Pencils: John Romita Jr.
Inks: Scott Hanna
Cover: J. Scott Campbell

© Marvel

Raw CGC copy: 9.4 **Then $2.25 NOW $4**

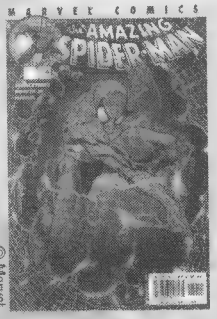
	UNSLABBED Near Mint	UNSLABBED Near Mint	UNSLABBED Near Mint	UNSLABBED Near Mint
342-352	60	481	7	Ann 8	4	16	3
353-358	75	482	5	Ann 9	3	16/30¢	20
359	350	483	8	Ann 10	4	17	3
➥1st Batgirl		484	5			17/30¢	20
360-362	65	485-499	4	**Devil Dinosaur**		18-23	3
363	100	500	5	MARVEL, 1978		23/35¢	15
➥2nd Batgirl		501-503	4	1	5	24	3
364	60	504	6	2-3	4	24/35¢	15
365	90	505-523	4	4	5	25	3
366-368	60	524	5	5	4	25/35¢	15
369	75	525-534	4	6-9	3	26-81	2
370	45	535	5			Ann 1	6
371	80	536-564	4	**Doctor Solar, Man of the Atom**		Special 1	3
➥Batmobile		565-568	3	GOLD KEY, 1962			
372-376	50	569-570	4	1	150	**Donald Duck**	
377	65	571	3	2	80	DELL, 1952	
378-380	50	572	4	3	50	26	300
381-386	40	573-574	3	4	60	27-29	100
387	75	575	4	5	30	30-44	65
388	50	576-577	3	6-10	25	45	125
389-390	35	578-585	4	11-14	16	➥Barks art	
391-393	25	586-587	3	15	20	46	175
394	35	588-590	4	16-20	16	➥Barks "Secret"	
395	125	591-675	3	21-27	12	47-51	65
➥N. Adams art		675/Platinum	5	28-31	4	52	150
396-397	35	675/Variant	4			➥Barks "Lost"	
398-399	30	676	3	**Doctor Strange**		53	65
400	175	677-682	2	MARVEL, 1968		54	125
➥1st Man-Bat		682/Variant	3	169	75	➥Barks Forbid. Valley	
401	30	683-699	2	170-171	30	55-58	50
402	55	700	4	172-173	27	59-60	125
403-404	35	700/Variant	5	174	20	➥Barks "Ants"	
405-407	30	701-718	2	175	35	61-67	40
408-410	40	719	3	176-183	27	68	100
411	30	720	4			➥Barks art	
➥1st Talia		721-722	3	**Doctor Strange**		69-70	40
412-424	25	723-740	2	MARVEL, 1974		71-84	30
425-427	20	741	3	1	25	85-120	25
428-436	15	742-746	2	2	18	121-135	20
437	20	747-749	3	3-4	10	136-150	15
➥100-page issue		750	5	5-6	8	151-190	10
438-445	28	751	12	7	7	191-210	5
➥100-page issue		➥1st Sasha		8-9	4	211-216	3
446	12	752-774	3	10	7	217	5
447-450	8	775	4	11	6	218-219	10
451-455	6	776-799	3	12-13	4	220-228	15
456-457	9	800	4	13/30¢	20	229-240	8
458-462	6	801-816	3	14	3	241-245	15
463	45	817	12	14/30¢	20	246	17
➥1st Calculator		818-823	3	15	3	247-249	5
464	6	1000000	4	15/30¢	20	250	8
465-468	9	1000000/Variant	15			251-260	4
469-470	5	Ann 1	5			261-279	3
471-473	8	Ann 2	4			280-285	2
➥1st new Deadshot		Ann 3-7	3			286	3
474-476	15					287-307	2
477-479	8						
480	5						

King Kull and Sivana team

In the past

	126	127	128	129	130	131	132	133	134	135
NM Price	NOV 51 $80	DEC 51 $80	JAN 52 $80	FEB 52 $80	MAR 52 $80	APR 52 $80	MAY 52 $80	JUN 52 $80	JUL 52 $80	AUG 52 $80

RETROVIEW
Amazing Spider-Man #34 (475) ★★★★



© Marvel

"Meltdown"

Ezekiel finds himself drawn into the battle between Spider-Man and Morlun.

While it appears that Spider-Man's completely on his own (although one has to wonder why The Fantastic Four or The Avengers haven't interceded), Ezekiel finally realizes that he got Spidey into this mess, now he has to help get him out.

J. Michael Straczynski has a talent for referencing earlier Spider-Man adventures. A scene with a bedraggled Spider-Man phoning Aunt May for what may be the last time stirs memories of classic Silver Age adventures in which The Wallcrawler had to take time out from a major battle for his aunt.

Marvel
Oct 2001 • 23 pp.
Writer: J. Michael Straczynski
Pencils: John Romita Jr.
Inks: Scott Hanna
Cover: J. Scott Campbell

CGC copy: 9.4 **Then $2.25 NOW $5**

Original Art

Creating your own comic holiday cards

With today's desktop publishing technology, many collectors create their own holiday cards using images from original art or other items in their collections. The results are wonderful cards that brighten many holiday mailboxes.

However, as you morph old holiday-related covers and sample original art into your holiday card, you need to consider two things.

First: Unless you are using very old images or public-domain material, the images are copyrighted. Make sure your card credits the copyright owner of the image. Small child-care centers have often found themselves sued for using licensed cartoon characters to promote their businesses. Before you use Mickey, Homer Simpson, *etc.*, to spread your company's holiday cheer, check with the copyright holder. Some may approve it as a positive promotion for their franchise; others may not.

Second: A number of art collectors I know commission art for their cards as con drawings or special commissions. If you do this, make sure the artist knows that the art will be published as your Christmas card and has the chance to grant permission for such use of the art.

— George Hagenauer

Doom Patrol DC, 1964

	UNSLABBED Near Mint
86	135
87	70
88-90	50
91-98	40
99	60
100	75
101-120	25
121 ➥Doom Patrol dies	45
122-124	2

Doom Patrol DC, 1987

1	3
2-18	2
19	3
20-49	2
50	3
51-56	2
57	3
58-87	2
Ann 1	1
Ann 2	4

Dudley Do-Right CHARLTON, 1970

1	45
2	18
3	12
4-7	10

Dynamo TOWER, 1966

1	35
2-3	25
4	40

Earth Man on Venus AVON, 1951

1	875

80 Page Giant Magazine DC, 1964

1	295
2	150
3-5	125
7	150
8 ➥Secret Origins	265
9-11	125
12-15	80

Elseworlds 80-Page Giant DC, 1999

1	110

Eternals MARVEL, 1976

1	10
1/30¢	25
2	5
2/30¢	20
3-5	3
6-12	2
12/35¢	15
13	2
13/35¢	15
14	2
14/35¢	15
15	2
15/35¢	15
16	2
16/35¢	15
17-19	2
Ann 1	7

Excalibur MARVEL, 1988

-1	2
1	3
2-49	2
50	3
51-70	2
71 ➥Hologram cover	4
72-75	2
75/Variant	4
76-81	2
82	3
82/Variant	4
83-99	2
100	3
101-124	2
125	3
Ann 1	4
Ann 2	3

Exiles MARVEL, 2001

1	4
2-24	2
25-59	3
60 ➥Age of Apoc.	5
61 ➥Age of Apoc.	4
62-86	3

Fables DC, 2002

1	4
2-5	3
6/Retailer ed.	15
6-49	3
50	4
51-53	3

Family Guy DEVIL'S DUE, 2006

1-2	7

Famous First Edition DC, 1974

F-4 ➥Whiz #2	15
F-5 ➥Batman #1	13
F-6 ➥W. Woman #1	10
F-7 ➥All-Star #3	12
F-8 ➥Flash #1	9
C-26 ➥Action #1	10
C-28 ➥Detective #27	9
C-30 ➥Sensation #1	10
C-61 ➥Superman #1	9

Fantastic Four MARVEL, 1961

1 ➥1st Fantastic Four	20000
1/Golden	70
2 ➥1st Skrulls	4500
3	3000
4	3500
5 ➥1st Dr. Doom	5000
6	2000
7	1250
8	1200
9-10	1150
11	1000
12 ➥Thing vs Hulk	2700
13	600
14	500
15	700
16-19	500
20	600
21	450
22-23	250
24	240
25 ➥Avengers app.	550
26 ➥Avengers app.	600
27	300
28 ➥X-Men app.	500
29-31	260
32-34	250
35-40	165
41-43	110
44	85
45 ➥1st Inhumans	325
46	150
47	100
48 ➥1st Silver Surfer	460
49	350
50	400
51	150
52 ➥1st Black Panther	300
53	140
54	105
55 ➥Thing vs. Surfer	210
56	100
57	115
58	90
59	60
60	65
61	70
62-63	60
64	50
65	55
66 ➥1st Warlock	115
67	105
68-69	60
70	55
71	45
72 ➥Silver Surfer app.	100
73	80
74	85
75	55
76	45
77	50
78	35
79	50
80-85	40
86	50
87	40
88-89	35
90-93	30
94	40
95-96	30
97-98	25
99	30
100	70
101-105	30
106	22
107	30
108	22
109-111	20
112 ➥Thing vs Hulk	175
113	25
114	27
115	25
116 ➥52 pages	65
117-120	15
121 ➥Galactus app.	30
122	45
123	27
124-125	20
126	30
127	35
128	30
129	25
130-132	15
133-145	12
146	10
147	15
148-154	10
155	15
156-158	12
159-163	10
164	9
165	7
166	10
167	15
168-169	10
169/30¢	20
170	10
170/30¢	20
171	6
171/30¢	20
172	6
172/30¢	20
173	6
173/30¢	20
174-183	6
183/35¢	15
184	6
184/35¢	15
185	5
185/35¢	15
186	5
186/35¢	15
187	5
187/35¢	15
188-200 ➥Byrne script/art begins	5
201-239	4
240-248	3
249	4
250	5
251	4
252-255	3
256	4
257-259	3
260	5
261	4
262-268	3
269	4
270	3
271	4
272	5
273-286	3
287-295	2
296	3
297-299	2
300	3
301-318	2
319	3
320-346	2
347-350	3
351-357	2
358	3
359-370	2
371	3
372-374	1
375	3
376-378	1
379-380	2
381	3
382	2
383-387	1
387/Variant	3
388-394	2
394/Collector's	3
395-398	2
398/Variant	3
399	2
399/Variant	3
400	4
401-415	2
416-500/Collector's	4
501	2
502	5
503-508	3
509	2
510-513	3
514-516	2
517-526	3
527 ➥Straczynski starts	7
527/Variant	4
527/DirCut	5
527/Conv	7
528-535	3
536	10
537	7
538-539	3
Ann 1	900

Fights witchcraft — Flying saucer story — Horror story — Sivana steals Shazam powers — Fights Earth — Final issue

NM	136 SEP 52	137 OCT 52	138 NOV 52	139 DEC 52	140 JAN 53	141 FEB 53	142 MAR 53	143 APR 53	144 MAY 53	145 JUN 53	146 JUL 53	147 AUG 53	148 SEP 53	149 OCT 53	150 NOV 53
Price	$80	$80	$80	$80	$80	$80	$80	$80	$80	$80	$80	$80	$80	$80	$80

Dragon Ball Z Vol. 23

Kaio-shin may be the lord of the Dragon Ball universe, but even he fears the resurrection of djinn Boo — the puffy pink clay boy who is the most unstoppable force ever. The son of its creator, the roach-like mage Bobbidi claims mastery over this mindless monster, despite the rightful misgivings of his demonic bodyguard Dabra.

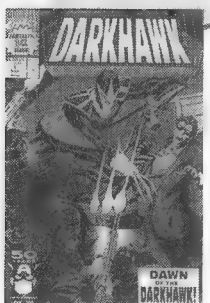
VIZ
WRITER:
AKIRA TORIYAMA
ARTIST:
AKIRA TORIYAMA
B/W • 192 Pgs.
$7.95

Awakened with an appetite for destruction, Boo pulverizes Kaio-shin and Gohan, only to face Vegeta, who sucker-punched Goku so he could face this menace alone. But, in the face of the big bang, Boo bounces back better than ever, despite the intervention of Piccolo. If anyone can stop this menace with a sweet tooth, it may be Gohan, who has pulled the fabled Zeta sword from the stone.

Akira Toriyama's epic manga continues with its trademark meandering megaton madness. Boo is an inspired creation, adding more rounds to this endless series of bruising bouts. And with Trunks and Goten added to the bench, the expanding roster ensures readers have a lot of players to watch out for.

★★★ **— Oliver Chin**

www.viz.com
ISBN: 1-4215-0148-1



▲ #1

DARKHAWK
THE EARTH-SHAKING SAGA CONTINUES!

Capturing lightning again

Nearly 30 years after introducing comics fans to Peter Parker, a teenage hero with problems, Marvel attempted to recapture that same magic with Darkhawk, the story of another teen, Chris Powell, who gained his powers from a mystic amulet.

image © 1991 Marvel

THE BOTTOM LINE

	UNSLABBED Near Mint
Fantastic Four CONTINUED	
Ann 2	500
Ann 3	175
Ann 4	90
Ann 5	60
Ann 6	40
Ann 7-8	18
Ann 9	10
Ann 10-11	8
Ann 12-14	5
Ann 15-27	3
Special 1	2
Ashcan 1	1
Fantastic Four MARVEL, 1996	
1	4
1/Variant	3
1/Gold	4
2-11	2
12	3
13	2
Fantastic Four MARVEL, 1998	
1	3
1/A	4
2-5	3
6-24	2
25	3
26-34	2
35	3
36-49	2
50-51	4
52	2
53	3
54	4
55-59	2
60	1
61-70	2
Ann 1998	5
Ann 1999	4
Ann 2001	3
Fantasy Masterpieces MARVEL, 1966	
1	75
2	35
3	30
4-8	18
9	30
10	10
11	15
F.B.I. DELL, 1965	
1	60
Fear MARVEL, 1970	
1	95
2	30
3-4	15
5	20
6-9	15
10 ➥Man-Thing starts	35
11	18
12	12
13-14	9
15-17	12
18	9
19 ➥1st Howard Duck	25
20 ➥Morbius begins	20
21	9
22	7
23	8
24 ➥Blade app.	12
25	8
26-29	7
30	12
31	7
52 DC, 2006	
1	4
2-6	3
7	4
8-29	3
Fight Comics FICTION HOUSE, 1940	
1	3500
2	1250
3	650
4	600
5	500
6-10	450
11-14	425
15-16	500
17-18	425
19	450
20-30	350
31-40	200
41-50	175
51-60	125
61-86	100
Fightin' 5 CHARLTON, 1964	
28	20
29-30	10
31-39	9
40 ➥1st Peacemaker	18
41	10
42-49	3
Fightin' Army CHARLTON, 1956	
16	24
17-20	18
21-30	15
31-40	12
41-50	10
51-75	8
76 ➥Willy Schultz	10
77-100	6
101-120	5
121-172	4
Flash DC, 1959	
105	6500
106	2000
107	1000
108	850
109	650
110 ➥1st Kid Flash	1500
111	450
112 ➥1st Elong. Man	600
113	550
114	275
115	350
116	250
117	300
118-120	250
121-122	200
123 ➥1st Earth-2	1500
124-128	150
129 ➥GA Flash app.	325
130	150
131-136	125
137 ➥GA Flash app.	475
138-140	125
141-142	150
143	125
144-150	100
151	80
152-153	65
154-158	60
159	75
160 ➥Giant-size	90
161-164	50
165	70
166-167	50
168	95
169 ➥Origin of Flash	70
170-174	50
175 ➥Race w/Superman	175
176-179	40
180	50
181-183	35
184	50
185-186	35
187	65
188-191	35
192-193	25
194	40
195	25
196	40
197-200	25
201-202	20
203	25
204	20
205	35
206	20
207-212	17
213	25
214	40
215	35
216-219	17
220-228	15
229	30
230-231	15
232 ➥100-page issue	30
233-237	10
238-245	7
246	12
247-262	7
263-273	4
274	5
275	7
276-288	4
289	5
290-299	3
300	5
301-304	3
305-306	4
307-349	3
350	7
Ann 1	400
Flash Comics DC, 1940	
1 ➥1st Flash, Hawkman	70000
2	8000
3	5500
4	4500
5	3500
6	5000
7	4500
8	3000
9-10	3250
11-20	2000
21-24	1600
25-40	1000
41-50	800
51-61	600
62 ➥Kubert Hawkman	1000
63-69	600
70-85	550
86 ➥1st Black Canary	2250
87	875
88-91	900
92 ➥1st solo Bl. Canary	3000
93	700
94-99	1000
100 ➥Scarce	2500
101-102 ➥Scarce	2250
103 ➥Scarce	2500
104 ➥Flash origin recap	7000
Flintstones DELL, 1961	
1	55
2	38
3-5	30
6-7	24
8-10	20
11-20	18
21-30	15
31-40	12
41-60	9
Flintstones CHARLTON, 1970	
1	36
2	22
3-5	14
6-10	9
11-20	7
21-30	5
31-50	4
Forever People DC, 1971	
1	35
2	20
3-5	18
6-11	14
Four Star Spectacular DC, 1976	
1	12
2-6	7
Frankenstein MARVEL, 1973	
1	40
2	15
3-5	9
6-7	7
8	18
9	20
10	6
11-18	5
Freedom Fighters DC, 1976	
1	12
2-3	5
4-15	4
Futurama BONGO, 2000	
1	7
1/2nd-19	3
Future World Comics GEORGE W. DOUGHERTY, 1946	
1	200
2	160
Generation X MARVEL, 1994	
-1	2
1/2-1/2/Ltd.	3
1	4
2-24	2
25	3
26-49	2
50-50/ Autographed	3
51-56	2
57	3
58-74	2
75	3
Ann 1995	4
Ann '96-'97	3
Ann '98-'99	4
Ashcan 1	1
Holiday 1	4

PRICE GUIDE KEY: OTHER GRADES

Unslabbed (loose) Very Fine/Near Mint is **5/6 (83%)** of the unslabbed NM price above
Very Fine (VF) is **2/3 (67%)** of NM
Fine (F) is **1/3 (33%)** of NM
Very Good (VG) is **1/5 (20%)** of NM
Good (G) is **1/8 (12.5%)** of NM

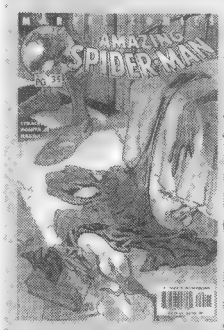
Spider-Man, Hobgoblin appear

Daredevil, Captain America appear

Punisher appears

NM Price	1 MAR 91	2 APR 91	3 MAY 91	4 JUN 91	5 JUL 91	6 AUG 91	7 SEP 91	8 OCT 91	9 NOV 91	10 DEC 91
	$2	$2	$2	$2	$2	$2	$2	$2	$2	$2

RETROVIEW
Amazing Spider-Man #35 (476) ★★★



"Coming Out"

Spider-Man figures out how to defeat Morlun, and Aunt May learns a startling secret.

The great cover by J. Scott Campbell doesn't really give away the issue's ending at first glance, but it definitely hints at it.

Spider-Man's solution to stopping Morlun's rampage is thoughtful and refers back to Spidey's origins once again. The aftermath is believeable with just enough slice-of-life moments to make things fun.

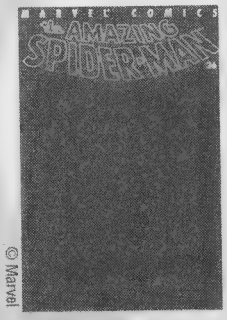
The final few pages are suspenseful and definitely will bring readers back for more. Right after a special issue coming up next ...

Marvel
Nov 2001 • 23 pp.
Writer: J. Michael Straczynski
Pencils: John Romita Jr.
Inks: Scott Hanna
Cover: J. Scott Campbell

Raw CGC copy: **9.6** **Then $2.25 NOW $4**

© Marvel

Amazing Spider-Man #36 (477) ★★★★★



© Marvel

Untitled

J. Michael Straczynski, John Romita Jr., and others show Spider-Man and the Marvel universe's response to the events of September 11.

It would be a travesty to actually review this issue, so, instead, I'll break from our traditional four-star rating system and give this an extra star in lieu of an infinity symbol.

The events of September 11 were a national tragedy, and J. Michael Straczynski's words were designed to put the events into perspective. His inspiring text should be repeated every year on Sept. 11, as the poem "In Flanders' Field" is recited every Veterans Day.

Marvel
Dec 2001 • 22 pp.
Writer: J. Michael Straczynski
Pencils: John Romita Jr.
Inks: Scott Hanna
Cover: Uncredited (all black)

Near CGC copy: **9.6** **Then $2.25 NOW $9**

UNSLABBED Near Mint
George of the Jungle GOLD KEY, 1969
1 ... 35
2 ... 24
Ghost Rider MARVEL, 1973
1 ... 130
2 ... 37
3-4 ... 25
5 ... 23
6-14 ... 15
15-16 ... 12
17 ... 10
17/30¢ ... 20
18 ... 10
18/30¢ ... 20
19 ... 10
19/30¢ ... 20
20 ... 10
21-24 ... 7
24/35¢ ... 15
25 ... 7
25/35¢ ... 15
26 ... 7
26/35¢ ... 15
27-30 ... 7
31-49 ... 6
Ghost Rider CONTINUED
50 ... 12
51-68 ... 5
69-80 ... 4
81 ... 10
Giant-Size Avengers MARVEL, 1974
1 ... 30
2 ... 25
3-4 ... 20
5 ... 15
Giant-Size Captain America MARVEL
1 ... 20
Giant-Size Captain Marvel MARVEL
1 ... 16

UNSLABBED Near Mint
Giant-Size Chillers MARVEL, 1974
1 ... 25
➥1st Lilith
Giant-Size Chillers MARVEL, 1975
1 ... 20
2-3 ... 15
Giant-Size Conan MARVEL, 1974
1 ... 16
2 ... 10
3 ... 7
4-5 ... 6
Giant-Size Creatures MARVEL, 1974
1 ... 25
Giant-Size Daredevil MARVEL, 1975
1 ... 15
Giant-Size Defenders MARVEL, 1974
1 ... 20
2-3 ... 10
4-5 ... 7
Giant-Size Doc Savage MARVEL, 1975
1 ... 10
Giant-Size Doctor Strange MARVEL, 1975
1 ... 15
Giant-Size Dracula MARVEL, 1974
2 ... 22
➥was GS Chillers
3-4 ... 15
5 ... 20
➥1st Marvel Byrne
Giant-Size

UNSLABBED Near Mint
Fantastic Four MARVEL, 1974
1 ... 20
2 ... 12
3 ... 10
4 ... 12
5-6 ... 10
Giant-Size Hulk MARVEL, 1975
1 ... 23
Giant-Size Hulk MARVEL, 2006
1 ... 8
Giant-Size Invaders MARVEL, 1975
1 ... 15
➥G.A. Subby origin
Giant-Size Iron Man MARVEL, 1975
1 ... 17
Giant-Size Kid Colt MARVEL, 1975
1 ... 27
2-3 ... 20
Giant-Size Man-Thing MARVEL, 1974
1 ... 15
2 ... 9
3 ... 12
4 ... 10
5 ... 12
Giant-Size Marvel Triple Action MARVEL, 1975
1 ... 15
2 ... 12
Giant-Size Master of Kung Fu MARVEL, 1974

UNSLABBED Near Mint
1 ... 17
2 ... 12
3-4 ... 10
Giant-Size Power Man MARVEL, 1975
1 ... 20
Giant-Size Spider-Man MARVEL, 1974
1 ... 35
2-3 ... 12
4 ... 45
➥Punisher app.
5 ... 12
6 ... 15
Giant-Size Super-Heroes MARVEL, 1974
1 ... 25
Giant-Size Super-Stars MARVEL, 1974
1 ... 20
Giant-Size Super-Villain Team-Up MARVEL, 1975
1 ... 17
2 ... 10
Giant-Size Thor MARVEL, 1975
1 ... 20
Giant-Size Werewolf By Night MARVEL, 1974
2 ... 20
3-5 ... 15
Giant-Size X-Men MARVEL, 1975
1 ... 800
➥1st new X-Men
2 ... 80
3-4 ... 5

UNSLABBED Near Mint
G.I. Combat DC, 1957
44 ... 500
45 ... 300
46 ... 250
47 ... 225
48-50 ... 100
51-54 ... 85
55 ... 125
56-60 ... 85
61-66 ... 70
67 ... 125
➥1st Tank Killer
68 ... 400
69-86 ... 70
87 ... 300
➥1st Haunted Tank
88-100 ... 55
101-110 ... 45
111-113 ... 38
114 ... 75
➥Haunted Tank origin
115-120 ... 28
121-140 ... 22
141-145 ... 8
146-150 ... 10
151-160 ... 8
161-180 ... 7
181-200 ... 5
201-250 ... 4
251-288 ... 3
G.I. Joe IMAGE, 2001
1-3 ... 3
4 ... 4
5-22 ... 3
22/Graham ... 12
23-25 ... 3
26-35 ... 3
35/Variant ... 4
36-42 ... 3
G.I. Joe, A Real American Hero MARVEL, 1982
1 ... 14
2 ... 8
3-9 ... 4
10 ... 6
11-13 ... 4
14 ... 5
15-18 ... 4
19 ... 6
20 ... 4
21 ... 15
➥Silent issue
22-55 ... 4
56 ... 5
57 ... 3
58 ... 4
59-151 ... 3
152-154 ... 7
155 ... 16
➥Low circulation
YB 1 ... 3
YB 2-4 ... 2
Special 1 ... 20
Gorgo CHARLTON, 1961
1 ... 200
2-3 ... 100
4 ... 75
5 ... 50
6-10 ... 40
11-16 ... 30
17-23 ... 20
Green Hornet Comics HARVEY, 1940
1 ... 4500
2 ... 1500
3 ... 1250

UNSLABBED Near Mint
4-6 ... 1000
7 ... 900
8 ... 750
9 ... 900
10 ... 650
11-19 ... 600
20 ... 700
21-31 ... 400
32-38 ... 300
39 ... 350
40-47 ... 250
Green Lama SPARK, 1944
1 ... 750
2 ... 475
3 ... 340
4-5 ... 240
6-8 ... 180
Green Lantern DC, 1941
1 ... 37500
➥Grn Lantern origin
2 ... 7500
3 ... 5500
4 ... 4000

UNSLABBED Near Mint
5 ... 2750
6 ... 2250
7-10 ... 2000
11-20 ... 1500
21-30 ... 1250
31-34 ... 1000
35-38 ... 1250
Green Lantern DC, 1960
1 ... 4500
➥1st Guardians
2 ... 1000
3 ... 600
4-5 ... 450
6 ... 400
7-10 ... 300
11-12 ... 200
13 ... 250
14-16 ... 175
17-20 ... 150
21-27 ... 125
28-30 ... 100
31-39 ... 75
40 ... 350
➥GA Lantern app.
41-49 ... 75

UNSLABBED Near Mint
50-51 ... 60
52 ... 80
53-58 ... 55
59 ... 125
➥1st Guy Gardner
60-75 ... 50
76 ... 375
➥Green Arrow starts
77-78 ... 75
79-84 ... 60
85 ... 50
86 ... 60
➥Drug issue
87 ... 50
88 ... 30
89 ... 45
90-92 ... 10
93-99 ... 9
100 ... 10
101 ... 9
102-111 ... 4
112 ... 8
113-115 ... 3
116 ... 8
117-121 ... 3
122 ... 4
123 ... 6
124-130 ... 3

UNSLABBED Near Mint
131-135 ... 2
136-139 ... 3
140 ... 2
141 ... 5
➥1st Omega Men
142-144 ... 3
145-149 ... 2
150 ... 5
151-173 ... 2
174 ... 3
175-178 ... 2
179 ... 3
180-193 ... 2
194 ... 3
195 ... 4
196-205 ... 2
Special 1-2 ... 3
Grendel COMICO, 1983
1 ... 45
2 ... 35
3 ... 26
Grendel COMICO, 1986
1 ... 5
2-5 ... 4

Original Art

Leonard Starr's *On Stage* art

The recent reprinting of the first year of *Mary Perkins On Stage* by **Leonard Starr** ($19.95 from Classic Comics Press, 55 West Chestnut St., Suite 2908, Chicago, IL 60610) has created renewed interest in Starr's exquisitely detailed art.

Starr's detailed line work and ability to design a page within the arcane limitations of the comic strip form are unsurpassed by any other artist working in the same period (late 1950s though 1970s).

On Stage is often wrongly written off as just another soap-opera strip. Starr, however, rapidly expanded his horizons to encompass stories of adventure around the world, social commentary (including possibly the first story about date rape ever done in comics), Cold War espionage, and even Gothic horror in the guise of Maximus, a Lon Chaneyesque horror actor.

So, for the art collector, there is a wide range of subject matter from which to select. There is also a lot of art in existence. While Starr has donated some art to Boston University and the Walker Museum, he has always been committed to making it available to fans — as well having had any number of agents selling his original since the 1970s. Starr still has *On Stage* originals for sale (an ad for his art is in the back of the first volume), though the prices are rising, as supplies dwindle and demand increases as a result of the new book.

— George Hagenauer

	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
		Goes to $1.25; fights Venom	Venom appears			Fights Peristrike Force			Spider-Man appears		Origin of Ghost Rider Darkhawk appears				Foil cover
NM Price	JAN 92 $2	FEB 92 $2	MAR 92 $2	APR 92 $2	MAY 92 $1	JUN 92 $1	JUL 92 $1	AUG 92 $1	SEP 92 $1	OCT 92 $1	NOV 92 $1	DEC 92 $1	JAN 93 $1	FEB 93 $1	MAR 93 $3

Line

Chiko is a pretty, popular, and financially well-off high school student. Bando is her bookworm classmate, who is, perhaps, a little standoffish. The two are thrown together, when Chiko finds a cell phone. The mysterious voice on the other end directs Chiko to troubled teens on the verge of suicide. With Bando in tow, Chiko must run all over the city, trying to reach people she has never met, before the clock runs out.

ADV MANGA
WRITER:
YUA KOTEGAWA
ARTIST:
YUA KOTEGAWA
B/W • 176 Pgs.
$9.99

The pace is frenetic; brief respites are interrupted by phone calls warning of the next teen to save. The mood swings, as Chiko may save one life but fail to save the next. We feel her exasperation, as she questions why she should bother at all, even as she knows she must. Our lungs burst vicariously, as Chiko and Bando run all over town.

What's really nice is that the volume is "Done in One," when so many manga series stretch out over four, 17, 35 volumes. We like our ongoing sagas, too, but it's nice to read a complete story with closure.

★★★ — **Jack Abramowitz**

www.adv-manga.com

ISBN: 1-4139-0249-9

RetroView

JOHN CARTER, WARLORD OF MARS

MARVEL COMICS

Reviewed by Tim Lasiuta

When last we left John Carter, he and his beloved wife, Dejah Thoris were just re-united under less than favorable circumstances. This year finds us following the Wolfman/Kane/Nebres "Air Pirates of Mars" to the exciting 10th chapter. In the case of John Carter, love is always the winner! Chris Claremont comes aboard with "The Master Assassin of Mars" with a variety of artists and captures our attention right away with the murder of John Carter! Who leads the Master Assassins? What lengths will they go to to gain power over Mars? Read on true believer!

John Carter ™ Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.

COST TO OWN THE ORIGINALS IN NM: $32

Grendel
CONTINUED

UNSLABBED Near Mint
6-15 3
16 4
17-32 3
33 4
34-39 3
40 4

Groo the Wanderer
MARVEL, 1985

UNSLABBED Near Mint
1 5
2-3 4
4-30 3
31-49 2
50 3
51-99 2
100 3
101-120 2

Haunted
CHARLTON, 1971

UNSLABBED Near Mint
1 12
2-3 6
4-6 5
7-10 4
11-75 3

Haunt of Fear
E.C., 1950

UNSLABBED Near Mint
1 2750
2-3 1000
4 750
5 550
6 425
7-9 400
10 375
11-13 300
14 450
15-18 300
19 375
20 300
21-28 250

Herbie
ACG, 1964

UNSLABBED Near Mint
1 95
2 60
3-5 48
6-7 40
8 50
9-10 38
11-23 30

Hero for Hire
MARVEL, 1972

UNSLABBED Near Mint
1 125
2 30
3 14
4-6 12
7-9 9
10 8
11-16 9

Hong Kong Phooey
CHARLTON, 1975

UNSLABBED Near Mint
1 40
2 20
3-9 10

Hot Wheels
DC, 1970

UNSLABBED Near Mint
1 45
2 30
3-5 24
6 30

House of M
MARVEL, 2005

UNSLABBED Near Mint
1 4
1/Quesada 30
1/DirCut 4
1/Madurera 12
1/Gatefold 5
2 3
2/Dodson 25
3 6
➥Hawkeye returns
3/Cassaday 20
4 3
4/Peterson 15
5 5
5/McKone 15
6 3
6/Land 15
7 4
8 3

House of Mystery
DC, 1951

UNSLABBED Near Mint
1 2000
2 850
3 600
4-5 450
6-10 350
11-15 300
16-25 220
26-35 170
36-50 140
51-61 95
62 70
63 85
64 70
65 85
66-69 70
70 85
71-75 65
76 85
77-79 65
80-83 54
84-85 85
86-99 54
100 65
101-116 45
117-119 35
120 45
121-130 28
131-142 22
143 175
➥J'onn J'onzz starts
144 75
145-155 50
156 75
➥1st Robby Reed
157-159 50
160 90
➥1st S A Plastic Man
161 35
162-173 32
174 50
175 45
176-177 24
178 45
179 60
➥1st Wrightson art
180-181 25
182 18
183 25
184 18
185 30
186 75
187 20
188 30
189-190 20
191 25
192 20
193 25
194 30
195 45
➥Wrightson swamp man
196-201 20
202-203 14
204 20
205-206 12
207 40
➥Wrightson art
208 12
209-213 10
214-220 6
221 12
222-223 6
224 35
225-226 18
227 27
228-229 18
230-250 5
251-259 4
260-321 3

House of Secrets
DC, 1956

UNSLABBED Near Mint
1 1500
2 550
3 450
4 350
5-7 200
8 230
9-12 200
13-15 125
16-20 110
21 85
22 80
23 100
➥1st Mark Merlin
24-30 80
31-50 65
51-60 52
61 125
➥1st Eclipso
62 60
63-65 50
66 65
➥Eclipso cover
67 40
68-79 36
80 45
81 55
➥1st Abel
82-84 20
85 32
86 20
87 45
➥Wrightson art
88-91 40
92 450
➥1st Swamp Thing
93-99 25
100 27
101-112 18
113-141 10
142-154 7

Hulk
MARVEL, 1999

UNSLABBED Near Mint
1 4
1/A 5
1/Gold 4
2-11 3

Hulk
MARVEL, 1978
➥Magazine

UNSLABBED Near Mint
10-21 7
22-27 5

Human Torch
MARVEL, 1940

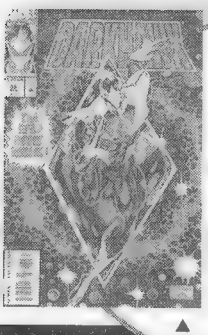
UNSLABBED Near Mint
1 32000
2 7400
3 4800
4 3400
5 4650
6-7 2100
8 3400
9 2100
10 2750
11-15 1850
16-20 1250
21-30 1025
31-38 850

Identity Crisis
DC, 2004

UNSLABBED Near Mint
1 15
1/Sketch 225
1/DF 15
2 8
3 7
4 8
5 7
6 8
7 7
7/DF Morales ... 15
7/DF Turner ... 25

Incredible Hulk
MARVEL, 1962

UNSLABBED Near Mint
-1 2
1 13000
➥1st Hulk
2 3500
3 2000
4-5 1750
6 2250
102 150
103 100
104 75
105 70
106-112 50
113-115 40
116-121 35
122 55
➥Thing vs. Hulk
123-125 30
126-130 25
131 30
132 25
133 20
134-136 16
➥Harlan Ellison
➥1st Doc Samson
137-151 20
152 25
153-160 20
161 30
162 55
➥1st Wendigo
163-171 15
172 25
➥X-Men app
173-176 15
177-178 17
179 16
180 180
➥Wolverine cameo
181 750
➥1st Wolverine story
181/Ace 5
182 100
➥2nd Wolverine
183 12
184-190 10
191-198 8
198/30¢ 20
199 8
199/30¢ 20
200 11
200/30¢ 30
201 7
201/30¢ 20
202 7
202/30¢ 20
203-212 7
212/35¢ 15
213 7
213/35¢ 15
214 7
214/35¢ 15
215 7
215/35¢ 15
216 7
216/35¢ 15
217-218 7
219-240 5
241-249 4
250 7
251-285 3
286 4
287-295 3
296 5
297 4
298-299 3
300 4
301-319 3
320-323 2
324 5
325 3
326 4
327-328 3
329 2
➥1st McFarlane
330-334 5
335 2
336-339 3
340 14
➥vs. Wolverine
341 4
342-349 2
350 5
➥1st Dale Keown
351-371 2
372 3
373-376 2
377-378 3
379-384 2
385 4
386 3
387-391 2
392 3
393 4
394 3
395-399 2
400 3
401-418 2
418/Variant 3
419-425 2
425/Variant 4
426-448 2



#38

DARKHAWK
THE EARTH-SHAKING SAGA CONTINUES!

Guest stars galore

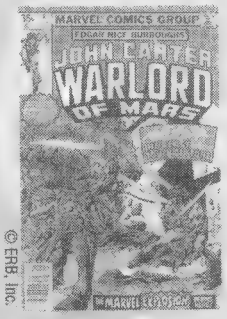
In addition to the obligatory appearances by Spider-Man, *Darkhawk* had a number of guest appearances by such Marvel stalwarts as Daredevil, Captain America, and The Punisher, as well as such up-and-comers as Venom, Ghost Rider, and Sleepwalker.

Image © 1994 Marvel

New Warriors appear ▼ "Infinity Crusade" tie-ins ▼ Venom appears ▼

NM Price	26 APR 93	27 MAY 93	28 JUN 93	29 JUL 93	30 AUG 93	31 SEP 93	32 OCT 93	33 NOV 93	34 DEC 93	35 JAN 94
	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1

John Carter #8 ★★★½



© ERB, Inc.

Marvel
Jan 1978 • 17 pp.
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Pencils: Gil Kane
Inks: Rudy Nebres
Cover: Kane, Nebres

"Air Pirates of Mars, Part 8: Flesh May Wither, and Stone May Crumble"

Stara Kan's mechanical arm attracts stone snakes to Helium as part of The Council's plan. Kantos Kan's love, Lyssia, is killed.

From the opening splash page of Dejah Thoris and John Carter sand skiing, you know you are in for a different story.

What could have been a so-so story is transformed by the great art of Gil Kane and Rudy Nebres. Their style captures the pathos and the intense mayhem that this tale requires to make it successful. The last panel is the best, with Kantos Kan weeping beside the stony fleeing figure of Lyssia.

Best CBG copy: 9.8

Then 35¢ NOW $3

	UNSLABBED Near Mint
449	8
450	5
451-474	2
Ann 1	115
Ann 2	40
Ann 3-4	25
Ann 5	9
Ann 6	7
Ann 7	9
Ann 8	5
Ann 9	3
Ann 10	4
Ann 11-19	3
Ann 20	4
Ann '97-'98	3
Ashcan 1	1
Incredible Hulk MARVEL, 1999 ➥Cont'd from Hulk	
12-20	3
21-24	2
25	3
26-33	2
34 ➥Bruce Jones starts	13
35	6
36-38	5
39-41	4
42-46	3
47-49	2
50	5
51	4
52-54	3
55-63	2
64	3
65-66	2
67-72	3
73-74	2
75-76	4
77-82	3
83	5
83/2nd	4
84	3
84/2nd	4
85-91	3
92	12
93-98	3
Ann 1999	5
Ann 2000	4
Ann 2001	3
Inferior Five DC, 1967	
1	24
2	16
3-10	14
11-12	10
Infinite Crisis DC, 2005	
1	6
1/2nd	4
1/RRP	450
2-4	6
5-7	4
Infinite Crisis Secret Files 2006 DC, 2006	
1	12
Invincible IMAGE, 2003	
0	1
1	25
2-4	12
5-11	7
12-15	5
16-24	3
25	5
26-35	3
Iron Fist MARVEL, 1975	
1	35
2	12
3	10
4	8
4/30¢	20
5	8
5/30¢	20
6	8
6/30¢	20
7-13	8
13/35¢	10
14 ➥1st Sabretooth	80
14/35¢	150
15 ➥X-Men app.	27
15/35¢	75
Iron Man MARVEL, 1968	
1	250
2-4	60
5	55
6-7	50
8	40
9	90
10	42
11-12	35
13-17	27
18-20	25
21-30	20
31-40	15
41-42	12
43 ➥1st Guardsman	35
44	12
45-46	15
47 ➥Barry Smith art	35
48-50	12
51	17
52-53	10
54	16
55 ➥1st Thanos	110
56-67	15
68-85	10
85/30¢	20
86	10
86/30¢	20
87	10
87/30¢	20
88	10
88/30¢	20
89	10
89/30¢	20
90-97	10
98-99	8
99/35¢	15
100	12
100/35¢	18
101	7
101/35¢	12
102	7
102/35¢	12
103	7
103/35¢ ➥Alcoholism issue	12
104-129	7
130-149	5
150	7
151-153	5
154	7
155-159	5
160	7
161-170	5
171-181	3
182	4
183-185	3
186	4
187-191	3
192	4
193-200	3
201-224	2
225-232/A	3
233-243	2
244	3
245-250	2
251-257	1
258-280	2
281-282	3
283-284	2
285-287	1
288	3
289	1
290	4
291-299	1
300	3
300/Variant	4
301-304	1
305-310	2
310/Collector's	3
311-316	2
317	3
318-324	2
325	3
326-332	2
Ann 1	27
Ann 2	20
Ann 3	10
Ann 4	4
Ann 5-10	3
Ann 11-13	2
Ann 14-15	3
Ashcan 1	2
Iron Man MARVEL, 1996	
1-1/A	3
2-11	2
12	4
13	3
Iron Man MARVEL, 1998	
1-1/A	4
2	2
3-12	2
13	3
14-45	2
46	4
47-49	2
50	3
51-66	2
67-83	3
84	8
85	5
86-89	3
Ann '98-'00	4
Ann 2001	3
Iron Man MARVEL, 2004	
1	4
2-12	3
Iron Man & Sub-Mariner MARVEL, 1968	
1	100
JLA DC, 1997	
1	6
2-6	4
7-15	3
16-40	2
41	3
42-49	2
50	4
51-74	2
75	4
76-99	2
100	4
101-106 ➥Post ID Crisis	2
107-108 ➥Post ID Crisis	5
109-114	2
115 ➥ID Crisis follow-up	12
116	5
117-125	3
1000000	2
Ann 1	6
Ann 2	5
Ann 3	4
GS 1-2	5
GS 3	6
JLA/ Avengers MARVEL, 2003	
1	7
3	6
3/2nd	7
John Carter, Warlord of Mars MARVEL, 1977	
1	8
1/35¢	15
2	4
2/35¢	8
3	3
3/35¢	8
4	3
4/35¢	8
5	3
5/35¢	8
6-28	3
Ann 1-3	2
Joker DC, 1975	
1	16
2	12
3-5	8
6-9	7
Jonah Hex DC, 1977	
1	28
2	10
3-5	7
6	6
7-8	7
9-10	5
11-20	4
21-92	3
Journey into Mystery MARVEL, 1952	
-1	2
1	3100
2	950
3-4	700
5	800
6-11	450
12-22	350
23-32	225
33	250
34-40	225
41-49	200
50	160
51-61	155
62	250
63-71	145
72	140
73	200
74-81	140
82	160
83 ➥1st Thor	4500
83/Golden	60
84	725
85	450
86	400
87	600
88	250
89	300
90	150
91-92	130
93	160
94-96	130
97	325
98	120
99	105
100	115
101	150
102-108	75
109	90
110-111	75
112 ➥Thor vs. Hulk	210
113-114	75
115	90
116	75
117-125	70
503-521	2
Ann 1	150
Journey into Mystery MARVEL, 1972	
1	17
2-3	7
4-5	6
6-19	5
JSA DC, 1999	
1	5
2-36	3
37	4
38-49	3
50	4
51-57	3
58	4
59-66	3
67 ➥Identity Crisis tie	7
68	5
69-70	4
71	3
72	4
73 ➥Inf. Crisis tie	5
74 ➥Inf. Crisis tie	4
75-87	3
Ann 1	5

Original Art

Collecting partial dailies

As more and more new collectors enter the original-art market from today's comic-book market, heavily influenced by grading and condition, art with various defects has often dropped in price.

This is especially true of comic strips with large sections or complete panels that are Photostat photocopy. As circulations dropped in the 1960s and 1970s, many story-strip artists including *Juliet Jones*' **Stan Drake**, *Dark Shadows*' **Ken Bald**, *On Stage*'s **Leonard Starr**, and others began using copies for repetitive parts of strips, usually the first or last transition panels. This saved them time and stress when their incomes often were dropping.

While some originals are just big messy paste-ups, others have some incredibly beautiful art — such as the panel shown here from an *On Stage* daily. The daily has two beautiful panels of *On Stage*'s leading lady, Mary Perkins. It cost me about 40% the cost of a normal daily, because part of the last panel was a stat.

And that is probably a higher-end price for a daily with a stat. I've seen originals at auctions go far lower — at 10% to 25% of the normal price for a daily — when, in fact, 60% of the original art is still there. For those collecting strip art on a budget, it's a way to obtain very nice art without spending a lot of money.

— ***George Hagenauer*** *reports on the original art markets for* ***CBG****. Write him at* ***yellowkd@merr.com****.*

Venom appears

Goes to $1.50

	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
NM	FEB 94	MAR 94	APR 94	MAY 94	JUN 94	JUL 94	AUG 94	SEP 94	OCT 94	NOV 94	DEC 94	JAN 95	FEB 95	MAR 95	APR 95
Price	$1	$1	$1	$2	$2	$2	$2	$2	$2	$2	$2	$2	$2	$2	$3

Nickelplate

This is the comic book everyone is talking about from Wizard World Chicago. It's 40 black-and-white action-packed pages and the best part about it is listening to creator Tracy Rogers talk about it.

SILVERTIP
WRITER:
TRACY ROGERS
ARTIST:
TRACY ROGERS
B/W • 40 Pgs.
$3

Nickelplate is some sort of government agent who was going to be coated with nickel-plated armor, but the government only had enough money for part of his chest. The bad guys, for some reason, always shoot him there. Rogers' art is clean, but his anatomy is off. He jumps from hand lettering to computer lettering, neither of which is particularly good, but they are readable.

The story is a relentless series of action sequences that lead into the next with little break. It's a breathless pace that doesn't leave you enough time to make much sense of the plot. Rogers loves his creation and it was his enthusiasm that made me buy it. On its own, I can't recommend it yet, but if you encounter Rogers at a con, you have to hear his pitch and buy it. It's an impulse buy you'll thank me for.

★1/2 — Tony DiGerolamo

silvertipcomics@hotmail.com

UNSLABBED Near Mint

JSA: Classified
DC, 2005
1/Conner 16
1/Hughes 24
1/Sketch. 7
2. 9
2/Sketch. 4
3-4. 5
5-16. 3

Judomaster
CHARLTON, 1966
89. 12
90-98. 9

Jungle Action
MARVEL, 1972
1. 15
2-4. 7
5. 35
6. 12
7. 8
8. 15
9. 7
10-16. 6
17-21. 5
21/30¢ 20
22. 5
22/30¢ 20
23-24. 5

Justice League
DC, 1987
1. 6
2-3. 3
3/Ltd. 10
4-6. 2
Ann 1. 3

Justice League Adventures
DC, 2002
1. 3
2-34. 2

Justice League America
DC, 1989
0-50. 2
51-68. 1
69. 3
70-99. 2
100. 3
100/Variant 4
101-113. 2
Ann 4-8 3
Ann 9. 4
Ann 10. 3
Special 1 2
Special 2 3

Justice League of America
DC, 1960
1. 5000
2. 1250
3. 1000
4. 700

UNSLABBED Near Mint

5. 600
6-8. 400
9. 1000
➥JLA origin
10. 400
11-15. 250
16-20. 225
21. 350
➥Earth-2 visit
22. 325
23-30. 150
31. 100
32-33. 90
34-36. 75
➥Supes vs. Cap. Mrv.
37-39. 125
40-41. 75
42-45. 60
➥1st SA Sandman
46. 110
➥JSA app.
47. 95

Justice League of America
CONTINUED
48. 140
➥Giant issue
49-52. 60
53-54. 55
55. 115
➥JSA team-up
56. 100
➥JSA team-up
57-62. 55
63-66. 45
67. 60
➥Giant
68. 50
69-72. 45
➥Giant
73-81. 35
82. 45
➥G.A. Batman app
83-84. 30
85. 40
➥Giant
86-90. 25
91. 35
92. 32
93. 25
➥Giant
94. 60
➥Sandman origin
95-99. 20
100. 65
101-106. 20
107-108. 25
109. 20
110-116. 25
117-125. 15
126-136. 10
137. 20
138-150. 7
151-165. 5
166-167. 12
168. 25
➥Mindwipe story
169-199. 5
200. 7
201-217. 3
218. 4
219. 3
220. 4
221-226. 3
227. 4
228-260. 3
261. 4
Ann 1. 5
Ann 2-3 4

Justice League of America
DC, 2006
0-1. 6
2. 4
3. 3

RETROVIEW

John Carter #9 ★★★

"Air Pirates of Mars, Part 9: Armageddon ... at Last"

John Carter, Dejah Thoris, and the Helium fleet destroy The Council of Five's headquarters, but The Great One survives.

In this issue, we see the twin devotion of Carter and Thoris uniting to destroy The Council of Five. As impassioned as Carter is, his Princess is, as well.

As Carter united Barsoom, hatred for the Council has united all of Helium.

In terms of literature, this tale ranks high. It has tension, commitment, and pathos in equal measure; one of the best issues in the entire *John Carter* run.

Marvel
Feb 1978 • 17 pp.
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Pencils: Ed Kane
Inks: Rudy Nebres
Cover: Kane, Nebres

© ERB, Inc.

Blue CGC copy **9.8** **Then 35¢ NOW $3**

UNSLABBED Near Mint

Kid Eternity
QUALITY, 1946
1. 560
2. 290
3. 250
4-5. 175
6-10. 135
11-18. 105

King Kong
GOLD KEY, 1968
1. 12

Korak, Son of Tarzan
GOLD KEY, 1964
1. 65
2-5. 45
6-11. 30
12-18. 25
19-37. 20
38-46. 17
47-51. 15
52-59. 10

Leading Comics
DC, 1941
1. 3500
2. 1100

Leading Comics
CONTINUED
3. 850
4-5. 675
6-10. 580
11-15. 440
16-22. 70
23. 110
24-30. 55
31-41. 40

League of Extraordinary Gentlemen
DC, 1999
1. 8
1/A-2 5
3-5. 4
5/A. 65
➥Recalled edition
6. 4

League of Extraordinary Gentlemen
DC, 2002
1-6. 4

Legion of Monsters
MARVEL
1. 35

Legion of Super-Heroes
DC, 1973
1. 15
2. 8
3-4. 7

Legion of Super-Heroes
DC, 1980
259. 4
260-270. 3
271-284. 2
285. 3
286-296. 2
297. 3
298-309. 2
310. 3
311-313. 2
Ann 1. 3
Ann 2-3 2

Legion of Super-Heroes
DC, 1984
1. 5
2-5. 4
6-36. 2
37-38. 5
39-44. 2
45. 3
46-63. 2
Ann 1. 3
Ann 2-3 2
Ann 4. 3

Legion of Super-Heroes
DC, 1989
0. 2
1. 3
2-37. 2
38. 3
39-49. 2

UNSLABBED Near Mint

50. 4
51-53. 2
54. 3
55-99. 2
100. 6
101-108. 2
109-123. 3
1000000. 4
Ann 1. 5
Ann 2-6 4
Ann 7. 3

Legion of Super-Heroes
DC, 2005
1. 4
2-15. 3
➥Becomes Supergirl and the ...

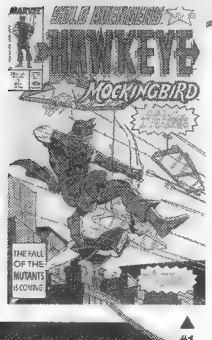
Limited Collectors' Edition
DC, 1973
C-20. 32
➥Rudolph
C-21. 16
C-22. 14
C-23. 16
C-24. 26
➥Rudolph
C-25. 28
➥Batman
C-27. 16
C-29. 10
C-31. 15
C-32. 10
C-33. 16
C-34. 12
C-35. 10
C-36. 16
C-37. 20
➥Batman
C-38-C-39 . . . 10
C-40. 12
C-41-C-43 . . . 10
C-44. 12
C-45-C-47 . . . 10
C-48. 12
C-49-C-50 . . . 10
C-51. 12
C-52. 10
C-57-C-59 . . . 14

UNSLABBED Near Mint

Lone Ranger
DELL, 1948
1. 660
2. 360
3. 265
4-5. 230
6-7. 195
8. 275
➥Lone Ranger origin
9-10. 195
11-20. 138
21-30. 100
31-40. 75
41-50. 58
51-60. 50
61-70. 48
71-80. 38
81-100. 34
101-111. 30
112. 55
113-117. 45
118. 50
119-145. 45

Magnus, Robot Fighter
GOLD KEY, 1963
1. 200
2-3. 125
4-10. 60
11-20. 35
21-28. 20
29-45. 10
45/Whitman. . . . 18
46. 10

Magnus Robot Fighter
VALIANT, 1991
0/Card 40
0/No card 30
1. 10
2. 8
3-4. 5
➥Flip-book w/Rai #1
5-6. 6
7-8. 4
9-10. 3
11. 6
12. 20
➥1st Valiant Turok
13-16. 3
17-21. 2



▲ #1

SOLO AVENGERS™

Hawkeye's hangout

In 1987, Marvel added another title to its Avengers stable with *Solo Avengers*, a series that focused on individual team members. Longtime Avenger Hawkeye had the lead spot each issue with a different Avenger in the back-up story.

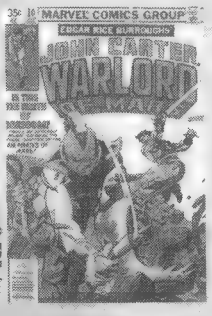
Image © 1987 Marvel

	I.D. card; Mockingbird	Captain Marvel	Moon Knight	Black Knight	Scarlet Witch	Falcon	Black Widow	Hank Pym
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
NM Price	DEC 87 $1	JAN 88 $1	FEB 88 $1	MAR 88 $1	APR 88 $1	MAY 88 $1	JUN 88 $1	JUL 88 $1

THE BOTTOM LINE

RETROVIEW

John Carter #10 ★★★



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Marvel
Mar 1978 • 18 pp.
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Pencils: Gil Kane
Inks: The Tribe
Cover: Kane

"Air Pirates of Mars, Part 10: Confrontation"

John Carter is chosen by The Great One to survive his purge of Barsoom. In a heated battle, The Great One escapes, only to die in a crash.

This issue's tale, "Confrontation," is simply that. Carter confronts The Great One, and Tars Tarkas struggles with his loyalties.

Marv Wolfman handles the conflicts well, and the final chapter of "Air Pirates" is excellent, story- and art-wise. The art is steady, with The Tribe finishing Gil Kane's pencils, and the best panel is easily page 23 Carter and the Great One in full battle!

All considered, the "Air Pirates of Mars" is a fine piece of fiction.

Raw CGC copy **9.4** **Then 35¢ NOW $3**

	UNSLABBED Near Mint
21/Gold	20
22-25	2
25/WSS	15
26-35	1
36	2
37-43	1
44	3
45-54	2
55-57	3
57/error	10
58-60	3
61-62	4
63	5
64	12
YB 1	5

Man-Thing
MARVEL, 1974

1	30
2	14
3	10
4	8
5	10
6-10	5
11-22	3

Marvel Collectors' Item Classics
MARVEL, 1966

1	125
2	70
3-4	45
5-6	30
7-10	15
11-20	12
21-22	17
23	20

Marvel Family
FAWCETT, 1945

1	1100
2	525
3	425
4-5	315
6-10	265
11-20	200
21-30	165
31-40	135
41-70	100
71-81	85
82-89	75

	UNSLABBED Near Mint
Marvel Mystery Comics MARVEL, 1939	
2	30000
3	15000
4	12500
5	22500
6-7	7500
8	10000
9	25000
10	8000
11	3800
12	4000
13	5000
14-17	2500
18	2250
19-20	2500
21	2000
22-25	1700
26-30	1475
31-41	1325
42-48	1125
49	1450
50	1125
51-67	1000
68-78	860
79	810
80	1275
81	975
82	2250
83	810
84	1250
85	810
86	890
87	785
88-91	950
92	2500

Marvel Premiere
MARVEL, 1972

1	35
2	12
3	30
➥Dr. Strange	
4	10
5-6	8
7	15
8	10
9	6
10	9
11-12	5
13	8
14	12
15	80

	UNSLABBED Near Mint
➥1st Iron Fist	
16	20
➥2nd Iron Fist	
17-18	12
19-24	10
25	15
26	4
27	10
28	13
29	3
29/30¢	20
30	3
30/30¢	20
31	3
31/30¢	20
32-36	3
36/35¢	15
37	3
37/35¢	15
38	3
38/35¢	15
39-49	3
50	13
➥1st Alice Cooper	
51-56	3
57	5
58-61	3

Marvel Spotlight
MARVEL, 1971

1	25
2	130
➥1st Werewolf	
3-4	30
5	275
➥1st Ghost Rider	
6	45
7	35
8	25
9	30
10	35
11-12	22
13	12
14-15	10
16-19	7
20-21	5
22	6
23-24	5
25-27	3
27/30¢	20
28	10
28/30¢	18
29	9
29/30¢	15
30-31	3
32	50

	UNSLABBED Near Mint
➥1st Spider-Woman	
33	3

Marvel Super-Heroes
MARVEL, 1966

12	95
➥1st Captain Mar-vell	
13	50
14	75
➥Reprints 1st Kirby	
15	42
16	25
17	30
18	40
➥1st Guardians	
19	20
20	35
21-27	12
28-30	10
31	20
32	6
33-45	4
46-57	3
57/30¢	20
58	3
58/30¢	20
59-65	3
65/35¢	15
66	3
66/35¢	15
67-80	3
81-105	2
Special 1	40
➥1966 one-shot	

Marvel Team-Up
MARVEL, 1972

1	185
2	30
3	25
4	45
➥X-Men app.	
5	18
6-10	16
11	13
12	18
➥Werewolf app.	
13-20	13
21-31	8
32-44	5
44/30¢	20
45	5
45/30¢	20
46	5

January Comics Birthdays

Jan. 1
Jack Enyart (1950)
Walter McDaniel (1971)

Jan. 2
Don Heck
John Heebink (1958)
Ernie Stiner (1958)
Kevin Bricklin (1965)
Timothy T. Markin (1968)

Jan. 3
Cheryl L. Ferraro
Tom Artis (1956)

Jan. 4
Chic Stone (1923)
Denis McFarling (1954)
Bob Almond (1967)

Jan. 5
Sandy Hausler (1959)

Jan. 6
Kay Reynolds (1951)
Bruce Patterson (1953)

Jan. 7
Werner Wejp-Olsen (1938)
Jay Lynch (1945)
Kevin J. Dooley (1953)
Bob Wiacek (1953)
Karl Kesel (1959)
Aaron A. Lopresti (1964)

Jan. 8
John Wellington
Boris Vallejo (1941)
Ken Steacy (1955)
James Pruett (1966)
Joe Pruett (1966)

Jan. 9
M.J. Cullumber
Daniel Wilson (1957)
Fred Burke (1965)

Jan. 10
Ernest Edwards (1967)

Jan. 11
Brad Joyce
Terry Beatty (1958)
Bob Harras (1959)
Miyako Graham (1960)
Sam Kieth (1963)
Trevor Tamlin (1968)

Jan. 12
Cary Coatney
Joe Quesada (1962)
Franchesco (1965)
John Miller (1968)

Jan. 13
Ron Goulart (1933)
Jerry Acerno (1961)
Anina Bennett (1965)

John Romita

Jan. 14
Rudy D. Nebres
John Tartaglione (1921)
Steven J. Woron (1958)

Jan. 15
Stan Kay
Norman Felchle (1964)

Jan. 16
Jim Berry (1932)
Randy H. Crawford (1953)
Steve Erwin (1960)
Christopher Schenck (1963)
David M. DeVries (1966)

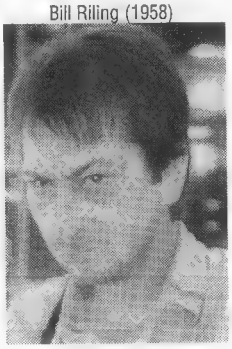
Jan. 17
Ann Nocenti (1957)
Peggy Ordway (1959)

Jan. 18
Fred Bauman (1964)
Bill Fountain (1965)

Jan. 19
Milton Schiffman (1922)
Jack Caprio (1932)
Joe Staton (1948)
Tom Yeates (1955)

Jan. 20
Keith Pollard
Marc Patten (1968)

Jan. 21
Rich Rankin (1954)
Mark Martin (1956)
Bill Riling (1958)


Frank Miller

Jan. 22
Steve Perrin (1946)
Marshall Rogers (1950)
Dennis Mallonee (1955)
Howard Mackie (1958)
Mark Miraglia (1959)
Lisa Trusiani Parker (1959)
Richard D. Irving (1966)

Jan. 23
Don Wright (1934)
Tom Condon (1949)
Klaus Janson (1952)
Cara Sherman-Tereno (1952)
Franz Henkel (1960)

Jan. 24
John Romita (1930)

Jan. 25
Robert J. Clarke (1926)
Bill Crouch Jr. (1945)
Gary Cohn (1952)
Turtel Onli (1952)
John Lustig (1953)
Chuck Wojtkiewicz (1959)

Jan. 26
Jules Feiffer (1929)
Sal Buscema (1936)
Gary L. Colabuono (1951)
Dwight R. Decker (1952)
Daniel A. Reed (1960)
Jacob Pander (1965)

Jan. 27
Dan DeCarlo Jr. (1948)
James DeCarlo (1948)
Steve Leialoha (1952)
Peter Laird (1954)
Tom Vincent (1956)
Frank Miller (1957)
Stefan Petrucha (1959)

Jan. 28
Daerick Gross Sr. (1947)
Todd Klein (1951)
Andrea Beam (1959)

Jan. 29
Jeph Loeb (1958)
David W. Olbrich (1960)

Jan. 30
Dann Maxx Thomas (1952)
Fred Hembeck (1953)
Guy Gilchrist (1957)
Denys Cowan (1961)
Link Yaco (1965)
Todd Michael Wright (1968)

Jan. 31
Paty Cockrum
Wendy Fiore (1949)

JSA-Marvel

	Hellcat	Doctor Druid	Hercules	Yellowjacket	Wonder Man	Black Widow	Wasp	Moondragon	Sub-Mariner	Moondragon	Black Panther	Becomes *Avengers Spotlight*
	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
NM Price	AUG 88 $1	SEP 88 $1	OCT 88 $1	NOV 88 $1	DEC 88 $1	JAN 89 $1	FEB 89 $1	MAR 89 $1	APR 89 $1	MAY 89 $1	JUN 89 $1	JUL 89 $1

Pop Art Funnies #7

This is an anthology of comics stories. It's got a very retro feel, akin to *The Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers, Archie,* and R. Crumb, but the art is nowhere near Crumb's level.

MPH COMICS
WRITERS:
VARIOUS
ARTISTS:
VARIOUS
B/W • 34 Pgs.
$2

The first story, "Super Bull," was about a guy bitten by a radioactive bull. He can turn into Super Bull by saying "Moo." This takes up most of the issue. It wasn't particularly funny or bad, it just wasn't my thing.

The next entry was a one-pager called "Sammy the Happy Snake." It has narration that rhymes. I don't get it.

"Captain Scurvy" is about pirates. He leads his men to the treasure, but it turns out to be man-eating lizards making fake maps to lure pirates to their doom.

It goes on like that: one-page gags that aren't particular funny, but harmless. It's almost like someone got someone to write *Mad* in the style of *Archie.* Kudos to the publisher for getting so much ad space. (I know how hard that is.) But that's not particularly endearing to a reader. I think the writers need to turn up their game and tackle subject matter that's a little more challenging.

★½ — Tony DiGerolamo

▲ #21

AVENGERS SPOTLIGHT

New name, same format

To get it racked alphabetically with the main Avengers title, Marvel retitled *Solo Avengers* as *Avengers Spotlight* with #21 (Aug 89).

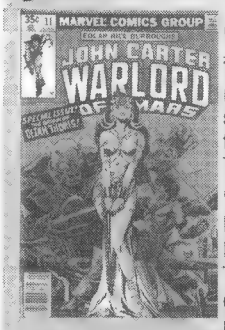
Hawkeye maintained his star position for most of the remainder of the run.

Image © 1989 Marvel

	UNSLABBED Near Mint
Marvel Team-Up CONTINUED	
46/30¢	20
47	4
47/30¢	20
48	4
48/30¢	20
49-52	4
53	15
➥X-Men app.	
54-58	4
58/35¢	15
59	4
59/35¢	15
60	4
60/35¢	15
61	4
61/35¢	15
62	4
62/35¢	15
63-65	4
66	7
➥Captain Britain app.	
67-94	4
95-99	3
100	6
101-136	3
137	4
138-143	3
144	4
145-150	3
Ann 1	30
Ann 2	6
Ann 3	4
Ann 4-6	3
Ann 7	2
Marvel Two-In-One MARVEL, 1974	
1	55
2	15
3	10
4	7
5-6	8
7-10	5
11-15	3
15/30¢	30
16	3
16/30¢	30
17	3
17/30¢	30
18	3
18/30¢	30
19-25	3
26-28	2
28/35¢	20
29	2
29/35¢	20
30	2
30/35¢	20
31	2
31/35¢	20
32-50	2
51	3
52-53	2
54	4
55-99	2
100	3
Ann 1	4
Ann 2	15
➥Warlock dies	
Ann 3-4	2
Ann 5	3
Ann 6-7	2
Marvel Zombies MARVEL, 2006	
1	55
1/2nd	35
1/3rd	12
2	16
3	6
3/2nd	4
4-5	3
Master of Kung Fu MARVEL, 1974	
17	15
18	7
19-20	6
Master of Kung Fu CONTINUED	
21-31	5
32-39	4
39/30¢	20
40	3
40/30¢	20
41	3
41/30¢	20
42	3
42/30¢	20
43	3
43/30¢	20
44-53	3
53/35¢	15
54	3
54/35¢	15
55	3
55/35¢	15
56	3
56/35¢	15
57	3
57/35¢	15
58-99	3
100	4
101-124	2
125	3
Ann 1	20
Metal Men DC, 1963	
1	500
2	225
3-5	150
6-10	80
11-20	55
21-26	45
27	80
➥Metal Men	
28-30	42
31-41	24
42-44	12
45-56	6
Metamorpho DC, 1965	
1	75
2	45
3	40
4-9	30
10-17	25
Mickey Mouse DELL, 1953	
28-30	40
31-35	30
36-40	25
41-50	20
51-60	16
61-70	15
71-80	14
81-100	12
101-120	11
121-140	10

	UNSLABBED Near Mint
141-160	8
161-180	7
181-200	6
201-203	5
204	8
205-206	5
207	20
208	50
209	20
210-214	7
215-218	10
219	12
220	4
221-240	3
241-256	2
Mickey Mouse and Friends GEMSTONE, 2003	
257-284	3
Mighty Samson GOLD KEY, 1964	
1	75
2-4	45
5-10	30
11-20	20
21-31	15
32	10
Military Comics COMIC MAGAZINES, 1941	
1	9000
2	2700
3	2150
4	1600
5	1375
6-7	1110
8-10	1000
11-12	875
13-15	760
16-20	650
21-22	560
23-43	465
Miracleman ECLIPSE, 1985	
1	10
2-4	8
4/Gold	15
5	8
5/Platinum	15
6-8	8
8/Gold	15
9-10	10
11-12	14
13	18
14	24
15	35
16	16
17	25
17/Gold	40
18	20
19-22	15
23	16
24	25
3D 1	10
3D 1/Gold	18
More Fun Comics DC, 1936	
➥Was New Fun	
7-8	5600
9	6500
10	3250
11	2850
12-13	2450
14	12500
➥1st Dr. Occult	
15-16	5000
17	4500
18-20	2150
21-25	1950
26-29	1775
30-40	1625
41-45	1325
46-50	1200
51	5000
➥Spectre cameo	
52	54000
➥1st Spectre story	
53	35000
54	9700
55	12400
➥1st Dr. Fate	
56	4400
57-59	3100
59/15¢	4500
60	3100
61-64	2500
65-66	2660
67	6850
68-70	2100
71	5750
72	1725
73	12200
➥1st Aquaman, G.A.	
74	2450
75-80	1725
81-88	1150
89	1325
90-99	940
100	1060
101	7850
➥1st Superboy	
102	1375
103	1025
104-105	760
106-107	650
108-110	165
111-120	140
121-124	115
125	575
➥Superman cover	
126	115
127	225
Ms. Marvel MARVEL, 1977	
1	8
2-6	3
6/35¢	15
7	3
7/35¢	15
8	3
8/35¢	15
9	3
➥1st Mystique	
9/35¢	15
10	3
10/35¢	15
11-15	2
16	15
➥Mystique cameo	
17	8
18	40
➥1st Mystique	
19	3
20-23	2
My Greatest Adventure DC, 1955	
1	1250
2	600
3-4	425
5-10	325
11-14	200
15-17	250
18	300
19	200
20-21	225
22-27	175
28	200
29-30	150
31-40	125
41-61	100
62-79	75
80	425
➥1st Doom Patrol	
81-85	150
Nature Boy CHARLTON, 1956	
3	55
4-5	50
New Avengers MARVEL, 2005	
1	7
1/Retailer ed.	70
➥Spider-Man cover	
1/DirCut	5
1/Quesada	12
1/Finch	9
1/2nd	3
2	2
2/Hairsine	45
3	2
3/Wolverine	45
4	3

RETROVIEW
John Carter #11 ★★★



Marvel
Apr 1978 • 17 pg.
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Pencils: Dave Cockrum
Inks: Rudy Nebres
Cover: Cockrum, Nebres

"The Story of Dejah Thoris"

The origin of Dejah Thoris, her first meeting with John Carter, and their subsequent marriage is told in this fill-in issue.

What can you say about the "origin" tale of a princess? Raised in luxury? Went to the finest schools? Not if you are talking about Dejah Thoris! This story is not about her early life but, rather, her life after she met Carter. As tumultuous as their life was after, it was so in the beginning, as well. Captivity. Escape. Love.

The "Origin" is a fitting tale in the *John Carter* series and only adds to the legend of the Martian princess.

© ERB, Inc.

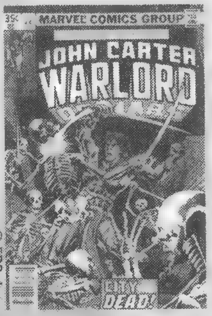
Last CGC copy: **9.6** **Then 35¢ NOW $3**

PRICE GUIDE KEY: OTHER GRADES

Unslabbed (loose) Very Fine/Near Mint is **5/6 (83%)** of the unslabbed NM price above
Very Fine (VF) is **2/3 (67%)** of NM
Fine (F) is **1/3 (33%)** of NM
Very Good (VG) is **1/5 (20%)** of NM
Good (G) is **1/8 (12.5%)** of NM

THE BOTTOM LINE	NM Price	Starfox	Swordsman	Vision	Espirita	Rick Jones	"Acts of Vengeance"; Iron Man, Reserve Avengers, Wonder Man		
		21 AUG 89	22 SEP 89	23 OCT 89	24 NOV 89	25 NOV 89	26 DEC 89	27 DEC 89	28 JAN 90
		$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1

RETROVIEW
John Carter #12 ★★★



© ERB, Inc.

"City of Skulls"

John Carter and Tars Tarkas search for Sola in the desert and crash near a City of Skulls. Carter is held in a death trap.

What else can Carmine Infantino do? As one of the best pencillers of the comic-book age, his talent shines in "City of Skulls," and Rudy Nebres' inking doesn't hurt, either. The great story shows the "softening" of Tars Tarkas in his declaration of love for his missing daughter, and the dedication of Carter toward those he calls friend.

True to form, battles and alien-worldliness are part of this tale, and the first view of the city is worthy of pinup status!

Marvel
May 1978 • 17 pp.
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Pencils: Carmine Infantino
Inks: Rudy Nebres
Cover: Infantino, Nebres

Best CGC copy: 9.6 — **Then 35¢ Now $3**

UNSLABBED Near Mint

4/Cheung 15
4/DF 20
5 2
5/Granov 15
6 2
6/Hitch 15
7 7
7/Adams 25
8 3
8/Romita 20
9 3
9/Trimpe 15
10-23 3
Ann 1 4

New Book of Comics
DC, 1937
1 13000
2 6500

New Comics
DC, 1935
1 16000
2 10000
3-7 3000
8-11 2750

New Funnies
DELL, 1942
65 475
66-70 255
71-75 175
76 550
77-80 145
81-90 115
91-100 75
101-110 54
111-120 42
121-130 34
131-150 26
151-170 18
171-190 15
191-220 12
221-240 10
241-260 8
272-288 6

Nick Fury, Agent of SHIELD
MARVEL, 1968
1 75
2-5 40

UNSLABBED Near Mint

6-8 30
9-13 25
14 20
15 50
➥1st Bullseye
16-18 20

Nightwing
DC, 1996
1/2 4
1/2/Platinum 7
1 11
2 6
3-5 4
6-15 3
16-49 2
50 4
51-98 2
99 3
100 4
101-106 5
➥Year 1
107-108 2
109-124 3
1000000 2
Ann 1 5
GS 1 6

Not Brand Echh
MARVEL, 1967
1 45
2 18
3-5 15
6-8 10
➥Giant issues start
9-13 25

Nova
MARVEL, 1976
1 8
2 4
3-10 3
10/35¢ 15
11 3
11/35¢ 15
12 3
12/35¢ 15
13 3
13/35¢ 15
14 3
14/35¢ 15
15-25 3

OMAC
DC, 1974
1 40

UNSLABBED Near Mint

2 15
3 12
4 10
5-8 7

OMAC Project
DC, 2005
1 22
1/2nd 7
1/3rd 3
2 6
2/2nd 3
3 4
4-6 3

Our Army at War
DC, 1952
1 1500
2 750
3-4 600
5-7 500
8-11 400
12 325
13 400
14 325
15-19 300
20 275
21-31 200
32-40 175
41-50 125
51-70 100
71-80 75
81 2500
➥1st Sgt. Rock
82 650
83 1800
➥1st Kubert Rock
84 300
85 350
86-87 300
88 325
89-90 300
91 700
➥1st all-Rock issue
92-100 175
101-112 125
113-118 150
119 125
120-121 80
122-125 75
126 100
127 75
128 275
➥Sgt. Rock Origin
129-133 75

UNSLABBED Near Mint

134-137 60
138-150 50
151 350
➥1st Enemy Ace
152 50
153 140
➥2nd Enemy Ace
154 40
155 75
➥3rd Enemy Ace
156-157 40
158 60
➥1st Iron Major
159-163 40
164 80
➥Giant-sized
165-167 40
168 90
➥1st Unknown Soldier
169-176 30
177 50
178-181 30
182-183 40
184-185 30
186 40
187-189 30
190 40
191-198 25
199-202 20
203 35
➥Giant
204-215 20
216 55
➥Giant-sized
217-228 15
229 35
➥Giant-sized
230-234 15
235-240 25
241 15
242 20
➥100-page issue
243-253 15
254 18
255 15
256 18
257 15
258-271 10
272 15
273-301 10

Phantom Stranger
DC, 1952
1 1500
2 1000
3-6 750

UNSLABBED Near Mint

Phantom Stranger
DC, 1969
1 125
2-3 60
4 70
5-7 50
8-13 40
14-17 35
18-21 25
22-41 15

Power Man & Iron Fist
MARVEL, 1974
17 8
18-20 5
21-30 4
30/30¢ 20
31 4
31/30¢ 20
32 3
32/30¢ 20
33 3
33/30¢ 20
34 3
34/30¢ 20
35-44 3
44/35¢ 15
45 3
45/35¢ 15
46 3
46/35¢ 15
47 3
47/35¢ 15
48 10
49-50 6
51-52 3
53-55 4
56 3
57 12
58-65 3
66 20
➥2nd Sabretooth
67-77 2
78 5
79-83 2
84 6
➥Sabretooth app.
85-125 2
Ann 1 4

Primer
COMICO, 1982
1 5
2 55
➥1st Grendel
3-4 4
5 50
➥1st Sam Kieth art
6 5

Rangers Comics
FICTION HOUSE, 1941
1 2750
2 850
3 650
4-5 500
6-12 425
13-19 350
20-24 300
25-29 250
30-39 175
40-59 120
60-69 90

Rawhide Kid
MARVEL, 1955
1 800
2 350
3-5 185
6-10 140
11-16 110
17 400
➥Origin, Kirby art

UNSLABBED Near Mint

18-21 95
22 90
23 200
➥Origin retold, Kirby
24-30 90
31-44 75
45 90
46 60
47-60 35
61-70 25
71-86 18
87-92 15
93-99 12
100 18
101-113 12
114-120 10
121-133 7
133/30¢ 20
134 7
134/30¢ 20
135-140 7
140/35¢ 15
141-151 6
Special 1 12

UNSLABBED Near Mint

Red Sonja
MARVEL, 1976
1 8
2-4 3
4/35¢ 20
5 3
5/35¢ 20
6 3
7-15 2

Red Sonja
DYNAMITE COMICS, 2005
0/Black-0/White 3
0/Ross 30
0/Sketch 150
0/Foil 10
0/Authentix 20
0/DF 25
1 20
1/Rivera 25
1/Adams 35
1/Linsner 125
1/Ross 40
1/Rubi 20
1/DF 35
2-4 0
5 3

UNSLABBED Near Mint

6-8 0

Richie Rich
HARVEY, 1960
1 3250
2 950
3 500
4-5 375
6-9 250
10 175
11-15 125
16-20 90
21-30 65
31-40 45
41-49 35
50-60 25
61-70 20
71-88 15
89-102 10
103-126 7
127-159 5
160-200 3
201-254 2

Rima, the Jungle Girl
DC, 1974

UNSLABBED Near Mint

1 13
2-7 7

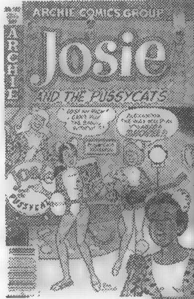
Rip Hunter... Time Master
DC, 1961
1 350
2 140
3 115
4-5 95
6-7 85
8-15 70
16-20 58
21-25 48
26-29 40

Robin
DC, 1993
0 2
1-1/Variant 4
2-14 2
14/Variant 3
15-49 2
50 3
51-74 2
75 3
76-99 2

Flashback 2002

5 years ago in CBG...

#1468 JANUARY 4 2002 In the aftermath of 9/11, creator **John Ney Rieber** said that he rewrote the first issue of the new *Captain America* series. The rewrite took one week, compared to the normal time of a month to write an issue, said Rieber.



#1469 JANUARY 11 2002 This issue's cover story was a memorial article for **Dan DeCarlo**, who died Dec. 19, 2001, in Scarsdale, N.Y., of a heart attack. Career highlights included creating such **Archie Comics** characters as **Josie and the Pussycats**, **Sabrina the Witch**, and **Cheryl Blossom**.

#1470 JANUARY 18 2002 Among the highlights in *CBG*'s annual **"The Year in Comics"** report was coverage of the industry's posting its first growth year since 1993, the Pulitzer Prize awarded to **Michael Chabon**'s ***The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay***, and the release of **Frank Miller**'s ***Dark Knight Strikes Again***.

#1471 JANUARY 25 2002 A "pay copy" of ***Marvel Comics*** #1 was sold to Jay Parrino's The Mint by Diamond Comic Distributors' **Steve Geppi** for a record-setting $350,000, breaking the record that had been set only weeks before by the sale of a ***Detective Comics*** #27 for $278,189.

— By Ray Sidman
from the Comics Buyer's Guide archives

	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
	"Acts of Vengeance"; Iron Man	New costume	U.S.Agent	U.S.Agent	U.S.Agent	U.S.Agent	Gilgamesh	No back-up story	Doctor Druid	Tigra	Black Knight	Vision
	FEB 90	MAR 90	APR 90	MAY 90	JUN 90	JUL 90	AUG 90	SEP 90	OCT 90	NOV 90	DEC 90	JAN 91
NM Price	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1

Raccoon Mafia: Operation: Jam War

Photocopied and stapled together, *Raccoon Mafia* is a three-story anthology written by Jon Kulczar.

Put together in some sort of contest, the first story is funny, the second story is good, and the third story doesn't even look finished. That's a shame.

NO HYPE COMICS
WRITER:
JON KULCZAR
ARTISTS:
VARIOUS
B/W • 20 Pgs.
$2

Is it too much to ask as a consumer that the comic book be finished? I mean, I realize it's a "jam," but can I pay with two unfinished dollar bills? The first story is about action figure-sized aliens looking for a comic book inside a comic-book story. The second story is about two assassins having pizza. The third unfinished story is about a monkey and rabbit fighting zombie chickens. It would've been a lot funnier with dialogue and all the panels finished.

It also says it's a "Convention Exclusive". Is that so the people at the next convention can buy it with all the panels done? Here's a real simple publishing tip: Finish the comic book before you go to press and never burn your fans. I don't even remember if I got charged for this, but my time is even more valuable. Finish!

★½ — Tony DiGerolamo

▲ #14

The West Coast Avengers

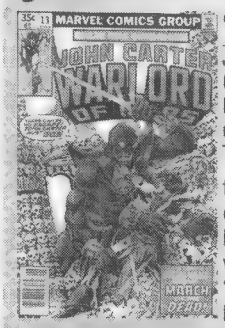
From limited to ongoing

Introduced in a four-issue mini-series in 1984, The West Coast Avengers received an ongoing series less than a year later. Featuring such characters as Hawkeye, Hank Pym, The Scarlet Witch, and The Vision, the title allowed fans more stories with their favorites.

Image © 1986 Marvel

	UNSLABBED Near Mint
Robin CONTINUED	
100	4
101-125	2
126	5
➥Robin quits	
127	4
➥New Robin	
128	3
129-139	2
140-154	3
1000000	4
Ann 3	3
Ann 4	4
Ann 5	3
Ann 6	4
GS 1	6
Sad Sack HARVEY, 1949	
1	500
2	250
3	125
4-10	100
11-19	70
20	50
21-30	35
31-40	25
41-50	15
51-70	10
71-90	8
91-100	5
101-150	3
151-287	2
288-289	3
290-293	2
3D 1	125
Saga of the Swamp Thing DC, 1982	
1	3
2-19	2
20	15
➥Alan Moore starts	
21	12
22-25	6
26-32	4
33	3
34	5
35-36	3
37	55
➥1st Hellblazer	
38	15
39-40	9
41-45	4
Ann 1	3
Ann 2	4
Ann 3	3
Sandman DC, 1974	
1	15
2	7
3-6	4
Sandman DC, 1989	
1	25
2-3	12
4-7	4
8	15
➥1st Death	
8/Ltd.	35
9-14	4
15-21	3
22	4
23-49	3
50	5
50/Gold	20
51-74	3
75	4
Special 1	5
Savage Dragon IMAGE, 1992	
1-3	3
Savage Dragon IMAGE, 1993	
0	2
1/2	3
1/2/Platinum	4
1-3	3
4-12	2
13-13/A	3
14	2
15-24	3
25-25/A	4
26-49	3
50	6
51/A-74	3
75	6
76-99	3
100	9
101-106	3
107	4
108-123	3
125	5
126-128	3
Scooby Doo, Where Are You? GOLD KEY, 1970	
1	100
2-8	50
9-19	25
20-30	15
Sea Devils DC, 1961	
1	500
2	300
3	200
4-5	125
6-13	75
14-20	50
21-35	35
Secret Agent GOLD KEY, 1966	
1	40
2	25
Secret Origins DC, 1961	
Ann 1	400
Secret Origins DC, 1973	
1	18
2	8
3-4	7
5-7	6
Secret Origins DC, 1986	
1	5
2-50	2
Ann 1	3
Ann 2-3	2
GS 1	5
Special 1	2

RETROVIEW
John Carter #13 ★★★



"March of the Dead"

John Carter rescues Sola from the City of Skulls. Zhuvan D'Ark attacks Helium to settle a 1,000-year-old debt.

What good are swords against fleshless bones? Carter and the men of Helium find out when the malevolent Zhuvan D'Ark comes calling with revenge on his shattered mind. "March of the Dead" is an exciting linking piece in the three-part "City of Skulls." Marv Wolfman does a great job of bringing the Tree of Life into the Carter-Marvel mythology and shows why he is so respected in the industry.

Artwise, Carmine Infantino and Rudy Nebres provide a seamless, well laid-out book that screams, "Buy me!"

© ERB, Inc.

Marvel
Jun 1978 • 17 pp.
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Pencils: Carmine Infantino
Inks: Rudy Nebres
Cover: Infantino, Nebres

Last CGC copy: **9.8** **Then 35¢ NOW $3**

	UNSLABBED Near Mint
Secret Six DC, 1968	
1	45
2	15
3-5	12
6	15
7	20
Secret Society of Super-Villains DC, 1976	
1	10
2-8	5
9-15	3
Secret War MARVEL, 2004	
1	10
1/2nd	5
1/3rd	4
2	6
2/2nd	4
3	5
4-5	4
Sensational Spider-Man MARVEL, 1996	
-1	2
0	5
1	2
1/Collector's	4
2-11	2
11/Collector's	7
12-24	2
25-25/A	3
26-33	2
Ann 1996	3
Sgt. Fury MARVEL, 1963	
1	1500
2	400
3-5	225
6-10	150
11-12	100
13	500
➥Cap. America app.	
14-15	80
16-19	75
20-23	50
24	30
25-27	50
28-31	40
32-38	25
39-40	20
41-63	15
64-99	12
100	25
101	12
102	10
103-110	8
111-121	6
122-131	5
132-133	4
133/30¢	20
134	4
134/30¢	20
135-141	4
141/35¢	15
142	4
142/35¢	15
143-151	4
152-167	3
Ann 1	125
Ann 2	55
Ann 3	30
Ann 4	22
Ann 5	10
Ann 6-7	9
Sgt. Rock DC, 1977	
302	25
303-307	15
308-312	10
313-320	8
321-330	6
331-341	5
342-350	4
351-390	3
391-422	2
Ann 1-2	4
Ann 3-4	3
Shadow ARCHIE, 1964	
1	30
2-8	18
Shadow DC, 1973	
1	12
2-3	8
4	6
5	4
6	5
7-12	4
Shazam! DC, 1973	
1	20
2-7	10
8	20
➥100-page issue	
9-17	10
18-35	7
She-Hulk MARVEL, 2004	
1	12
2	7
3	4
4-12	3
She-Hulk MARVEL, 2005	
1-7	3
8	12
9-10	3
SHIELD MARVEL, 1973	
1	15
2-5	5
Shogun Warriors MARVEL, 1979	
1	5
2-20	2
Showcase DC, 1956	
1	3500
2-3	1000
4	27500
➥1st Silver Age Flash	
5	1000
6	4000
7	2000
8	11500
➥2nd SA Flash	
9	7500
10	3000
11-12	1750
13-14	4500
15	2000
16	1000
17	2750
➥1st Adam Strange	
18	1200
19	1500
20	1000
21	500
22	5600
➥1st SA Grn. Lantern	
23-24	1750
25-26	350
27	900
28-29	400
30	800
31-32	400
33	375
34	1250
35	700
36	525
37	700
38	400
39	350
40	300
41-42	150
43	450
44	100
45	325
46-47	100
48-52	80
53-54	100
55	275
➥Dr. Fate origin	
56	125
57	225
58	150

PRICE GUIDE KEY: OTHER GRADES

Unslabbed (loose) Very Fine/Near Mint is **5/6 (83%)** of the unslabbed NM price above
Very Fine (VF) is **2/3 (67%)** of NM
Fine (F) is **1/3 (33%)** of NM
Very Good (VG) is **1/5 (20%)** of NM
Good (G) is **1/8 (12.5%)** of NM

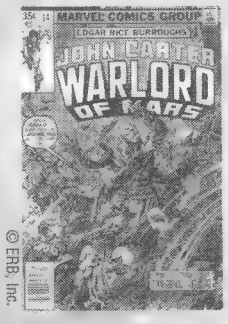
Team formed

	1	2	3	4	Ongoing series	1	2	3	4	5
NM Price	SEP 84 $3	OCT 84 $2	NOV 84 $2	DEC 84 $2		OCT 85 $2	NOV 85 $2	DEC 85 $2	JAN 86 $3	FEB 86 $1

Fights 1st Master Kraven Pandemonium

John Carter #14

★★★



© ERB, Inc.

Marvel
Jul 1978 • 17 pp.
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Pencils: Carmine Infantino
Inks: Rudy Nebres
Cover: Infantino, Nebres

"Tonight Is the Night Helium Dies"

The men of Helium rally to the prince's and princess' call, as Zhu-van D'Ark's evil plan falls short after his death.

Wow! If ever an original story cried out for novelization, this was it! Full of such ERB-like concepts as the Tree of Life, Martian loyalty and honor, and, of course, the incredible races that sprang from his fertile imagination, the conclusion of "City of Skulls" is excellent in all respects.

One of the highlights in this issue is Dejah Thoris taking up the battle cry in the absence of a missing Carter. Carmine Infantino and Rudy Nebres' cover isn't bad, either!

Then 35¢ Now $3

Spectre
DC, 1967
1. 150
2. 60
3-5 50
6-10 40

Spectre
DC, 1987
1-5 3
6-31 2
Ann 1 3

Spectre
DC, 1992
0. 3
1. 6
2. 5
3. 4
4-7 3
8. 4
9-20 3
21-36 2
37-62 3
Ann 1 4

Spectre
DC, 2001
1-27 3

Spider-Girl
MARVEL, 1998
0. 2
1/2 3
1-1/A 4
2-5 3
6-24 2
25. 3
26-58 2
59-74 3
75. 8
76-99 3
100. 4
Ann '99 4

Spider-Man
MARVEL, 1990
-1 2
1/2 4
1/2/Platinum. . . . 6
1-1/Collector's . . . 5
1/Platinum 42
1/Silver 5
2-8 3
9. 6
10. 4
11-12 3
13. 5
14. 3
15-25 2
26. 4
27-46 2
46/Collector's . . . 3
47-49 2
50. 3
50/Variant 4
51-51/Variant . . . 3
52-56 2
57-57/Variant . . . 3
58-74 2
75. 4
76-98/B 2
Ann '97-'98 . . . 3
GS 1. 4
Holiday 1995 . . 3

Spider-Woman
MARVEL, 1978
1. 6
2-3 3
4-36 2
1st Siryn
37-38 4
X-Men app.
39-49 1
50. 4

Spidey Super Stories
MARVEL, 1974
1. 20
Spider-Man origin
2. 6
3-57 5

Spirit
QUALITY, 1944
1. 600
2. 350
3. 250
4-5 185
6-10 150
11. 125
12-17 200
18-21 250
22. 350

Sinister House of Secret Love
DC, 1971
1. 125
2-4 75

Six Million Dollar Man
CHARLTON, 1976
1. 12
2. 6
3-5 5
6-9 4

Six Million Dollar Man
CHARLTON
1. 10
2. 8
3-7 5

Skull the Slayer
MARVEL, 1975
1. 12
2. 5
3. 2
4-5 4
5/30¢ 20
6. 3
6/30¢ 20
7-8 3

Sonic the Hedgehog
ARCHIE, 1993
0. 9
1. 12
2-3 9
4-5 7
6-10 6
11-20 4
21-50 3
51-166 2
Special 1 3
Special 2-15. . . 2

Son of Satan
MARVEL, 1975
1. 20
2. 15
3. 10
3/30¢ 15
4. 10
4/30¢ 15
5. 10
5/30¢ 15
6-8 10

Space Action
ACE, 1952
1. 525
2-3 350

Space: 1999
CHARLTON, 1975
1. 10
2-4 7
5-7 5

Space Adventures
CHARLTON, 1952
1. 240
2. 125
3-5 105
6-9 90
10-12 225
13-19 90
20. 110
21. 80
23. 100
24-32 70
33. 325
1st Captain Atom
34. 150
35-40 125
41. 25
42. 75
43-50. 25
51-60 18
61-72 12

Space Family Robinson
GOLD KEY, 1962
1. 225
2. 100
3-5 75
6-10 50
11-15 35
16-20 25
21-44 20
45-54 10
55-59 6

Space Ghost
GOLD KEY, 1967
1. 150

Spawn
IMAGE, 1992
1. 5
1/A 3
2. 4
3-6 3
7-9 4
10-50 3
51-97 2
98-99 3
100/A 6
100/B-100/F. . . 5
101-149 3
150. 5
151-160 3
Ann 1 5
Fan ed. 1-3. . . . 1

Special Marvel Edition
MARVEL, 1971
1. 20
2-4 15
5-14 7
15. 45
1st Shang-Chi
16. 18

Spectacular Spider-Man
MARVEL, 1968
1. 90
2. 75

Spectacular Spider-Man
MARVEL, 1976
-1 2
1. 25
2. 15
3. 8
4-7 5
7/35¢ 15
8. 5
8/35¢ 15
9. 5
9/35¢ 15
10. 4
10/35¢ 15
11. 4
11/35¢ 15
12-20 4
21-26 3
1st Miller Daredevil
27-28 15
2nd Miller Daredevil
29-55 3
56. 5
57-63 3
64. 5
1st Cloak & Dagger
65-82 3
83. 7
Punisher app.
84. 3
85. 5
86-99 3
100. 5
101. 3
102-115 2
116. 3
117-129 2
130. 3
131. 5
132. 4
133. 3
134-142 2
143. 4
144-146 2
147. 8
New Hobgoblin
148. 2
149. 3
150-157 2
158. 5
159. 4
160-188 2
189. 4
190-195 2
195/Collector's . . 3
196-199 2
200. 4
201-213 2
213/Collector's . . 3
214-217 2
217/Variant 3
218-219 2
220-221 3
222. 2
223-223/Variant . 3
224. 2
225. 5
225/Variant 4
226-228 2
229. 3
229/Variant-230. 4
231-249 2
250. 3
251-255 2
255/Variant 5
256-263 2
Ann 1 5
Ann 2 4
Ann 3-7 3
Ann 8 4
Ann 9-'97 3
Special 1 4

Spectacular Spider-Man
MARVEL, 2003
1. 4
1/CanExpo 6
2-3 3
4. 4
5-7 3
8-13 2
14. 3
15. 7
Avngrs Disassmbled
16. 5
Avngrs Disassmbled
17-19 2
20. 3
Organic web-shooters
21-27 2

Flashback 1997

10 years ago in CBG...

#1207 JANUARY 3 1997

Harvey Awards organizers announced the winners of the 1996 Harveys, including **Mike Mignola** for Best Artist (***Hellboy***), **Jeff Smith** for Best Cartoonist (***Bone***), and **Adrian Tomine** for Best New Talent (***Optic Nerve***).

#1208 JANUARY 10 1997

Scientist and author **Carl Sagan** died Dec. 20 following a battle with bone-marrow disease. He was 62.

#1209 JANUARY 17 1997

Marvel Comics filed a petition for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on Dec. 27, which the U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Delaware in Wilmington approved. The order approved full payment of salaries, wages, benefits, and bills.

#1210 JANUARY 24 1997

Image Comics announced it had acquired two more independently produced comic-book series: ***Amanda Gunn*** by **Jimmie Robinson** and ***Dusty Star*** by **Joe Pruett** and **Andrew Robinson**.

#1211 JANUARY 31 1997

Jimmy Palmiotti and **Joe Quesada** spoke to ***CBG*** about plans for 1997, which included a crossovers between **Event** and **DC Comics** with ***Ash/Azrael***, and **Top Cow**'s **Painkiller Jane** with **The Darkness**. ***Painkiller Jane***, a new series by writer **Garth Ennis**, was also announced.

— By Ray Sidman
from the Comics Buyer's Guide archives

	Fights Ultron	Fights Rangers					1st Halflife	Origin of Hellstorm						
NM	6 MAR 86	7 APR 86	8 MAY 86	9 JUN 86	10 JUL 86	11 AUG 86	12 SEP 86	13 OCT 86	14 NOV 86	15 DEC 86	16 JAN 87	17 FEB 87	18 MAR 87	19 APR 87
Price	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1

School Zone
Vols. 1-2

Objectively speaking, *School Zone* may not be the scariest *manga* ever. What kicks it up a terror notch is that it focuses on children. Children have a sense of foreboding when it comes to evil that adults cannot sense. Additionally, a child lacks power. When a parent or teacher forces a child into an environment that the student feels to be haunted or otherwise tainted, the child has no choice but to suck it up and forge ahead. It's an eerie combination: Kids know it's dangerous, but there's nothing they can do to avoid their fate.

DARK HORSE
WRITER:
KANAKO INUKI
ARTIST:
KANAKO INUKI
B/W • 192 Pgs.@
$9.95@

The school in question has 13 ghost stories. When a student learns them all, bad stuff is sure to happen. Most dangerous of all is the school zone.

School Zone enjoys Japanese sensibilities and pacing of horror that readers might appreciate from the *Ring* manga series. Don't judge based on American adaptations; Japanese horror has a flavor all its own.

★★★ — **Jack Abramowitz**

www.darkhorse.com

Vol. 1 ISBN: 1-59307-432-8

Vol. 2 ISBN: 1-59307-433-6

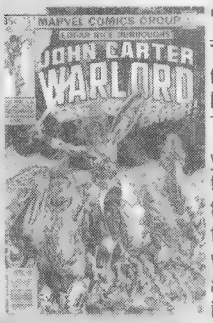
	UNSLABBED Near Mint
Spirit FICTION HOUSE, 1952	
1	250
2	225
3-4	175
5	200
Spoof MARVEL, 1970	
1	15
2	7
3	8
4-5	7
Spy Smasher FAWCETT, 1941	
1	2500
2	750
3-7	450
8-9	350
10	375
11	350
Star Spangled Comics DC, 1941	
1	4500
2	1800
3	1000
4-5	875
6	800
7	8000
➥1st Newsboy Legion	
8-10	1600
11-16	1175
17	1500
18-19	1000
20-30	850
31-40	525
41-50	425
51-60	400
61-64	375
65	1050
➥Robin stories start	
66-68	690
69	800
➥1st Tomahawk	
70	690
71-80	575
81-83	450
84	625
85-86	450
87	625
88-94	500
95-99	265
100	300
101-110	225
111-112	200
113	375
114	325
115-131	200
Star Spangled War Stories DC, 1952	
132 (1)	750
133 (2)	550
3	475
4-6	285
7-10	220
11-20	185
21-30	130
31-40	90
41-50	70
51-70	60
71-83	55
84	125
➥1st Mlle. Marie	
85-87	80
88-89	65
90	325
➥1st Dinosaur Island	
91	45
92	110
93	45
94-99	110
100	145
101-133	60
134	65
135-138	60
139	50
140-143	24
144	27
145	35
146-150	20
151	125
➥1st Unknown Soldier	
152-153	20
154	55
➥Unk. Soldier origin	
155	16
156-161	14
162-180	6
181-204	5
Star Trek GOLD KEY, 1967	
1	350
2	125
3	100
4	90
5-6	75
7	60
8-9	50
10	40
11-20	30
20/Whitman	45
21-23	30
23/Whitman	45
24-26	25
24-26/Whitman	35
27	20
27/Whitman	30
28-29	20
29/Whitman	30
30-36	20
31-36/Whitman	30
37-40	20
38-41/Whitman	30
41	25
42-48	15
44-48/Whitman	25
49-59	15
51-59/Whitman	25
60	12
60/Whitman	20
61	12
Star Trek MARVEL, 1980	
1	5
2	3
3-18	2
Star Wars MARVEL, 1977	
1	20
1/35¢	800
1/2nd	4
2	10
2/35¢	150
3	8
3/35¢	150
4	7
4/35¢	150
5-19	7
20-21	6
22-23	5
24-48	4

	UNSLABBED Near Mint
Star Wars CONTINUED	
49	5
50-106	4
107	25
➥Low distribution	
Ann 1	8
Ann 2-3	5
Strange Adventures DC, 1950	
1	2500
2	1150
3	850
4	800
5-6	650
7	625
8	550
9	1250
➥1st Captain Comet	
10	400
11	500
12	400
13	500
14	650
15	500
16	450
17	275
18-20	450
21-23	350
24	375
25	350
26-29	300
30	425
31-38	275
39	400
40-41	250
42	275
43	250
44	325
45-46	250
47	200
48	250
49	200
50	225
51	200
52-53	225
54	150
55	200
56-60	150
61-70	125
71-74	100
75	75
76-78	100
79	150
80-83	100
84	125
85-90	100
91	90
92-93	80
94	75
95	90
96	65
97	90
98	75
99	90
100	125
101	65
102-103	90
104-106	65
107	75
108-109	65
110	75
111	65
112	60
113	90
114	125
➥1st Star Hawkins	
115-116	60
117	550
➥1st Atomic Knights	
118	75
119	90
120	200
➥2nd Atomic Knights	
121-123	75
124	90
125-126	75
127	50
128	75
129	90
130-131	50
132	75
133-135	65
136-137	50
138	55
139-140	50
141	55
142-145	50
146	40
147-148	50
149	40
150-160	50
161-167	35
168	30
169	35
170	50
171-172	30
173	40
174	30
175	40
176-177	30
178	25
179	30
180	150
➥1st Animal Man	
181	25
182-183	30
184	60
➥Animal Man app.	
185-186	25
187	20
188	25
189	30
190	100
➥Animal Man app.	
191	20
192-193	25
194	20
195	35
➥Animal Man app.	
196-197	25
198	20
199	30
200	25
201	40
202-204	20
205	125
➥Deadman begins	
206	60
207	50
208-212	60
213	40
214	60
215	45
216	40
217-219	20
220	25
221-223	20
224-230	15
231-244	10
Strange Tales MARVEL, 1951	
1	2750
2	800
3-5	700
6-10	550
11-20	350
21-30	275
31-44	225
45-58	200
59	225
60	200
61	225
62-63	175
64	200
65-66	175
67-78	200
79	250
80	200
81-83	175
84	200
85-88	175
89	400
➥Kirby Fin Fang Foom	
90-92	175
93-96	150
97	350
➥Aunt May & Uncle Ben	
98-100	150
101	900
➥Human Torch starts	
102	425
➥Human Torch app.	
103-105	300
106	225
107	250
108-109	225
110	1250
➥1st Dr. Strange	
111	350
112-113	150

PRICE GUIDE KEY: OTHER GRADES

Unslabbed (loose) Very Fine/Near Mint is **5/6 (83%)** of the unslabbed NM price above
Very Fine (VF) is **2/3 (67%)** of NM
Fine (F) is **1/3 (33%)** of NM
Very Good (VG) is **1/5 (20%)** of NM
Good (G) is **1/8 (12.5%)** of NM

RETROVIEW
John Carter #15 ★★★½



"The History Holocaust"

The evil scientist Talus of Helium tries to destroy John Carter by having him battle throughout history.

Even before you open this issue, you know you have a winner. From the Gil Kane and Rudy Nebres cover to the inspired Walter Simonson interior pencils, this book is an artistic wonder. Simonson interprets Carter and Thoris with passion, and it shows in the clean flow of the story that travels through time. True to the central theme of *John Carter*, his love for his Princess keeps him strong and helps him defeat Talus.

With this issue, Marv Wolfman bids adieu to Carter. ERB would have been proud.

Marvel
Aug 1978 • 17 pp.
Writer: Marv Wolfman
Pencils: Walt Simonson, Ross Andru
Inks: Rudy Nebres, et al.
Cover: Gil Kane, Nebres

© ERB, Inc.

Then 35¢ NOW $3

▲ #22

Image © 1987 Marvel

The West Coast Avengers

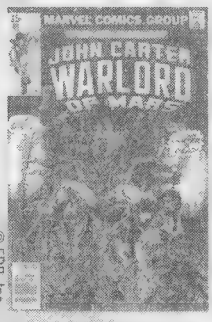
More guests

While various Avengers would appear (and occasionally join) the West Coast team, it was the drop-in guest stars that really made the series. Moon Knight and Doctor Strange made appearances in #21 and #22, respectively, for example.

Moon Knight appears — Dr. Strange appears — Fights Zodiac

NM Price	20 MAY 87	21 JUN 87	22 JUL 87	23 AUG 87	24 SEP 87	25 OCT 87	26 NOV 87	27 DEC 87	28 JAN 88	29 FEB 88
	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1

John Carter #16 ★★★



© ERB, Inc.

Marvel
Sep 1978 • 17 pp.
Writer: Chris Claremont
Pencils: Ernie Colon
Inks: Rudy Nebres
Cover: Nebres

"The Master Assassin of Mars, Part 1"

John Carter is poisoned by The League of Assassins. Helium mourns his "death." Dejah Thoris flies to avenge him and crashes in a canyon.

The team of Chris Claremont, Ernie Colon, and Rudy Nebres rocks! Starting off creatively where Marv Wolfman left off, this title seems to inspire greatness. The first chapter of "Master Assassin of Mars" draws the reader into the story, as any introduction should.

Colon's pencils and Nebres' inks combine to give Carter a continuity that keeps fans reading. Beautiful women and muscular heroes have a place in the Marvel Martian universe!

Then: Oct 2006 **9.6** Then: 35¢ Now: $3

	UNSLABBED Near Mint
114	350
115	450
➥Dr. Strange origin	
116	125
117-118	100
119-123	125
124-125	75
126	90
127-129	75
130	90
131-134	75
135	125
➥1st S.H.I.E.L.D.	
136	75
137-147	50
148	75
➥Ancient One origin	
149-150	50
151	75
152-158	50
159	60
160-168	50
169	15
➥Series restarted	
170	10
171-177	7
178	15
➥Warlock origin	
179-181	10
182-185	3
185/30¢	20
186	3
186/30¢	20
187-188	3
Ann 1	325
Ann 2	350

Stuntman Comics
HARVEY, 1946

1	685
2-3	425

Sub-Mariner
TIMELY, 1941

1	25000
2	7000
3	5000
4	4500
5	3500
6-11	2500
12-15	1500
16-20	1200
21-31	1000
32	1250
33-35	900
36-41	700
42	1000

Sub-Mariner
MARVEL, 1968

1	125
2	45
3-4	35
5	30
6-7	25
8	75
➥vs. The Thing	
9	30
10	25
11-13	20
14	50
➥Toro dies	
15-30	20
31-33	15
34	70
➥Hulk, Surfer app.	
35	35
➥Hulk, Surfer app.	
36-40	15
41-72	10
Special 1-2	15

Sugar & Spike
DC, 1956

1	1700
2	700
3-5	500
6-10	350
11-20	250
21-30	150
31-40	125
41-50	75
51-60	55
61-80	50
81-98	35

Suicide Squad
DC, 1987

1-22	1
23	15
➥1st Oracle	
24-49	1
50	2
51-66	1
Ann 1	2

Sun Girl
MARVEL, 1948

1	1000
2-3	675

Superboy
DC, 1949

1	7000
2	2000
3	1500
4-5	1000
6-10	800
11-15	600
16-20	450
21-30	350
31-38	275
39-50	225
51-60	175
61-67	125
68	500
➥1st Bizarro	
69-77	100
78	175
➥Mxyzptlk origin	
79	100
80	150
➥Meets Supergirl	
81-85	90
86	200
➥Leg-on app.	
87-88	90
89	275
➥1st Mon-El	
90-93	90
94-97	75
98	100
99	75
100	175
➥Phtm. Zone villains	
101-120	60
121-128	50
129	75
130-137	40
138	55
➥Giant-sized	
139-140	40
141-146	35
147	50
➥Saturn Girl origin	
148-155	25
156	65
➥Giant-size	
157-164	25
165	50
➥Giant-size	
166-168	25
169-173	20
174	30
175-178	20
➥Giant-sized	
179-181	15
182	20
183-196	12
197	20
➥Legion stories start	
198-199	12
200	15
201	12
202	30
203-204	12
205	40
206-207	12
208	15
209	10
210	15
211-212	10
213-221	7
222-230	5
Ann 1	175
SP 1	4

Super Goof
GOLD KEY, 1965

1	24
2-3	12
4-10	10
11-20	7
21-30	5
31-57	3
58-59	4
60	15
61	70
62	15
63	3
64-66	5
67-69	8
70-74	15

Superman
DC, 1939

1	160000
2	16000
3	9200
4	6500
5	6000
6-7	3500
8-10	2850
11-13	2200
14	4500
➥U.S. flag cover	
15	2050
16-20	1650
21	1500
22-23	1100
24	1400
25	1050
26	1250
27-29	950
30	1350
➥1st Mr. Mxyzptlk	
31-40	825
41-50	650
51-52	525
53	1800
➥Superman origin	
54-60	500
61	1000
➥1st Kryptonite	
62-70	475
71-75	450

Superman
CONTINUED

76	1100
➥Batman team-up	
77-80	400
81-90	375
91-95	360
96-99	325
100	1500
101-110	280
111-120	240
121-130	195
131-139	155
140	175
➥1st Bizarro Jr	
141-145	115
146	160
➥Superman origin	
147	135
148	115
149	125
➥Legion app	
150-161	68
162-180	58
181-186	55
187	60
188-192	55
193	60
194-198	55
199	180
➥1st race with Flash	
200	60
201	24
202	30
203-211	24
212	50
➥Superbabies	
213-216	24
217	30
218-221	20
222	30
223-226	20
227	30
228-231	20
232	30
233	40
➥Kryptonite destroyed	
234-238	18
239	30
➥Giant-sized	
240-244	18
245	22
246-251	18
252	60
➥100-page issue	
253	18
254	22
255-264	9
265-271	8
272	20
➥100-page issue	
273-277	7
278	17
➥100-page issue	
279-283	5
284	7
285-286	5
287-292	4
293-299	3
300	11
301-350	3
351-399	2
400	5
401-422	2
423	5
Ann 1	600
Ann 2	325
Ann 3	210
Ann 4	180
Ann 5	105
Ann 6	90
Ann 7	62
Ann 8	46
Ann 9-10	5
Ann 11	4
Ann 12	3
Special 1-3	4

Superman
DC, 1987

0	3
1-2	4
3-5	3
6-8	2
9	4
10-49	2
50	4
51-52	2
53	3
54-72	2
73	3
74	4
75	5
➥Death of Superman	
75/Collector's	12
75/Platinum	40
76-77	3
78	2
78/Collector's	3
79-82	2
82/Variant	4
83-99	2
100	3
100/Variant	4
101-122	2
123	3
123/Variant	5
124-150	2
150/Variant	4
151-170	2
171	4
172-174	2
175	4
176-190	2
190/A	4
191	2
192	3
193-199	2
200	4
201	8
202	2
203	6
➥Lee sketchbook	
204	4
204/Sketch	250
204/DF Lee	30
204/DF Azzarell	25
205/Lee	4
205/Turner	3
205/DF Lee	30
205/DF Turner	25
206-207	3
208	5
209	4
210-215	3
216	5
➥Inf. Crisis tie	
217	7
➥OMAC app	
218	5
219	6
➥Sacrifice Pt. 1	
219/Variant-226	3
➥1st series #s return	
650	8
651-656	3
1000000	4
1000000/Ltd.	15
Ann 1	4
Ann 2-6	3
Ann 7	4
Ann 8-11	3
Ann 12	4
GS 1-2	5
GS 3	6
Special 1	4
3D 1	5

Superman/ Batman
DC, 2003

1	8
1/RRP	125
1/2nd-1/3rd	4
2	6
3	5
3/2nd	3
4	4
5	3
6	4
7	3
8	10
➥1st new Supergir	
8/4th	3
9	5
9/2nd	4
9/3rd	3
10	5

Flashback 1992

15 years ago in CBG...

#946 JANUARY 3 1992

Lucasfilms and **Dark Horse Comics** announced that the ***Young Indiana Jones*** comic-book series would parallel the television series of the same name.

#947 JANUARY 10 1992

Cerebus creator **Dave Sim** announced a U.S. tour, at the same time canceling the biweekly reprints of his series and making the trade collections available through the direct market.

#948 JANUARY 17 1992

Comics writer, artist, and editor **Sheldon Mayer**, who was instrumental in bringing **Superman** to ***Action Comics***, died at age 74 in Copake, N.Y., on Dec. 21. He also was created, wrote, and drew ***Sugar and Spike***.

#949 JANUARY 24 1992

Marvel Comics announced the return of mercenary **Silver Sable** in the monthly ongoing series ***Silver Sable & The Wild Pack***, written by **Gregory Wright** with art by **Steve Butler** and **Dan Panosian**. The series was slated for an April 21, 1992, debut.

#950 JANUARY 31 1992

Capital City announced the winners of its 1991 **Capital City Awards**, including Publisher of the Year **Marvel Comics**, which cleaned house in the awards, led by ***X-Force*** #1 and ***X-Men*** #1.

— By Ray Sidman
from the Comics Buyer's Guide archives

Fights Arkon — Fights Quicksilver — Fights Doom — John Byrne story and art begin

NM Price	30 MAR 88 $1	31 APR 88 $1	32 MAY 88 $1	33 JUN 88 $1	34 JUL 88 $1	35 AUG 88 $1	36 SEP 88 $1	37 OCT 88 $1	38 NOV 88 $1	39 DEC 88 $1	40 JAN 89 $1	41 FEB 89 $1	42 MAR 89 $1	43 APR 89 $1

The Sire #1

It's official: With the publication of *The Sire*, all conceivable superhero names have been exhausted. "The Sire" was the last name on the bottom of the barrel and now it's been taken, so everybody else can just go home.

AFTERSHOCK
WRITER:
MICHAEL DOLCE
ARTIST:
DAN LEUTER
COLOR • 32 PGS.
$2.99

All right, that's a bit much — but "The Sire?" What's his power — fathering a litter of puppies?

The story is unremarkable. Mysterious circumstances create a new hero with mysterious powers and a cadre of new villains to oppose him. The characters are two-dimensional. The art is competently rendered, but there's little "wow." The villainous Soren Claus is kind of fun, if a tad clichéd.

There are bright moments. In one, a villain wonders why he is suddenly possessed by the irresistible urge to pummel the hero. In another, a reporter — a trained observer — actually recognizes a costumed character through his flimsy disguise — something neither Lois nor J. Jonah ever accomplished unaided.

All in all, *The Sire* is a standard, if oddly titled, super-hero saga. Perhaps the unusual name will be clarified in future installments.

★★ **— Jack Abramowitz**

www.mikebooks.com

#56

image © 1990 Marvel

AVENGERS WEST COAST

"House of M" on the West Coast

Following the events of "Acts of Vengeance," The Scarlet Witch had an episode that could be construed as a precursor to the later "House of M," where she reconstructed reality into her own warped image of what it should be.

Superman/ Batman
CONTINUED
UNSLABBED Near Mint
10/2nd 4
11. 5
12. 4
13. 5
13/Supergirl . . . 7
14-18 5
19. 4
20. 3
21. 4
22-24 3
26. 4
27-29 3

Superman Family
DC, 1974
164. 35
➥100-page issue
165-169 13
➥100-page issue
170-177 11
178-180 5
181-200 4
201-222 3

Superman's Girl Friend Lois Lane
DC, 1958
1. 2600
2. 625
3. 415
4-5 300
6-10 220
11-18 125
19. 215
20. 125
21-29 86
30-50 48
51-67 34
68. 44
69. 34
70. 175
➥1st SA Catwoman
71. 105
➥Catwoman app
72-73 15
74. 34
75-76 15
77. 24
78. 15
79-85 10
86. 16
87-94 10
95. 25
➥Giant-sized
96-103 8
104. 16
105-106 14
107-110 6
111. 10
112. 6
113. 14
114-120 6
121. 5
122-123 8
124-137 5
Ann 1 75
Ann 2 50

Superman's Pal Jimmy Olsen
DC, 1954
UNSLABBED Near Mint
1. 4000
2. 1250
3. 675
4-5 475
6-10 335
11-20 235
21-30 150
31-40 100
41-50 75
51-56 50
57-70 30
71. 25
72-73 30
74-75 25
76. 30
77-88 25
89-90 20
91-94 16
95. 25
96-99 16
100. 25
101-103 12
104. 35
➥Weird Adventures
105-112 12
113. 25
➥Anti-Superman ish
114-119 12
120-126 10
127. 16
128-130 10
131-132 8
133. 10
134. 25
135-140 12
141-150 10
151. 8
152-163 7

Supernatural Thrillers
MARVEL, 1972
1. 27
2-4 10
5. 27
➥1st Living Mummy
6-15 10

Super-Team Family
DC, 1975
1. 12
2-4 6
5-10 4
11-15 3

Super-Villain Team-Up
MARVEL, 1975
1. 7
2. 5
3-5 4
5/30¢ 20
6. 3
6/30¢ 20
7. 3
7/30¢ 20
8-12 3
12/35¢ 15
13. 3
13/35¢ 15
14. 3
14/35¢ 15
15-17 3

Swamp Thing
DC, 1972
1. 60
2. 30
3-4 20
5-6 15
7. 12
8-10 10
11-24 5

Swamp Thing
DC, 1986
46. 4
47-49 3
50. 4
51. 3
52. 4
53. 5
➥Batman app.
54-81 3
82-83 2
84. 5
➥Sandman app.
85-89 2
90. 3
91-99 2
100. 3
101-124 2
125. 3
126-140 2
140/Platinum . . . 6
141-149 2
150. 3
151-158 2
159-171 3
Ann 4-5 4
Ann 6 3
Ann 7 4

Tales From the Crypt
E.C., 1950
20. 775
21. 900
22. 700

Tales From the Crypt
CONTINUED
23-25 520
26-30 400
31. 460
32. 300
33. 675
➥Crypt Keeper origin
34-46 295

Tales of Suspense
MARVEL, 1959
1. 1400
2. 540
3. 475
4. 450
5-10 325
11-20 240
21-32 150
33-38 135
39. 3500
➥1st Iron Man
40. 1100
41. 650
42-45 325
➥1st Crimson Dynamo
46-47 210
48. 265
➥1st red/Gold armor
49. 210
50. 155
51. 105
52. 140
53. 120
➥Watcher origin
54-56 62
57. 170
➥Cap America app.
58-59 210
➥Cap stories start
60. 120
61-62 82
63. 180
➥Bucky origin
64. 72
65-66 125
➥Red Skull origin
67-70 52
71-80 42
81-99 32

Tales of the Zombie
MARVEL, 1973
1. 25
2. 18
3-5 15
6-10 10
Ann 1 15

Tales to Astonish
MARVEL, 1959
1. 2000
2. 635
3-5 440
6-10 355
11-20 265
21-26 200
27. 3600
➥1st Hank Pym
28-34 175
35. 1900
➥1st Ant-Man
36. 625
37-40 350
41-43 230
44. 500
➥1st Wasp
45-48 150
49. 250
➥1st Giant Man
50-56 95
57. 125
➥Spider-Man app.
58. 95
59. 150
➥Giant-Man vs. Hulk
60. 175
➥Hulk stories start
61. 75
62. 90
➥1st Leader
63-65 75
66-69 70
70. 100
➥Namor stories start
71-81 55
82. 78
83-90 55
91. 52
92-93 75
94-99 50
100. 75
101. 85

Tarzan
DELL, 1948
1. 900
2. 525
3-5 385
6-9 290
10. 260
11. 235
12-15 220
16-20 160
21-30 135
31-54 80
55-70 50
71-79 42
80-99 30
100. 40
101-110 28
111-120 25
121-131 20

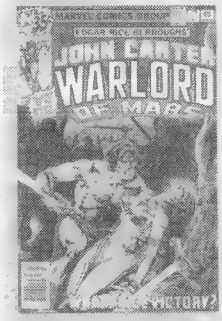
Tarzan
GOLD KEY, 1962
132-154 14
155. 18
156-162 10
163-164 8
165. 10
166-167 8
168. 10
169-170 8
171. 10
172-200 7
201-206 6

Tarzan
DC, 1972
207. 17
208. 10
209-210 6
211-229 4
230-235 8
236-258 3

Tarzan
MARVEL, 1977
1. 3
1/35¢ 15
2. 2
2/35¢ 15

PRICE GUIDE KEY: OTHER GRADES
Unslabbed (loose) Very Fine/Near Mint is **5/6 (83%)** of the unslabbed NM price above
Very Fine (VF) is **2/3 (67%)** of NM
Fine (F) is **1/3 (33%)** of NM
Very Good (VG) is **1/5 (20%)** of NM
Good (G) is **1/8 (12.5%)** of NM

RETROVIEW
John Carter #17 ★★½



"The Master Assassin of Mars, Part 2: What Price Victory?"

John Carter and Dejah Thoris find themselves in Karanthor among winged soldiers. Thoris is sold into slavery. Carter becomes second in command.

The second installment of the "Master Assassin of Mars" brings readers to the city of Karanthor, where Carter finds racism alive and well.

As with any Martian tale, we are left with a single cry, "Dejah," and a despondent Carter alone without his princess.

We are left with questions, including: Who is the Master Assassin? To what lengths will Carter go to rescue Dejah Thoris?

Marvel
Oct 1978 • 17 pp.
Writer: Chris Claremont
Pencils: Ernie Colon
Inks: Bob Layton
Cover: Gil Kane, Pete Natera

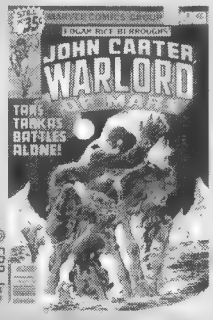
© ERB, Inc.

CGC copies **Then 35¢ NOW $3**

RETROVIEW

John Carter #18

★★½



"Master Assassin of Mars, Part 3: Meanwhile, Back in Helium"

Tars Tarkas battles Barak Sol for the leadership of the Tharks in the ruined city. Tars wins the battle but makes an enemy.

An enjoyable segue in the "Master Assassin" story arc, "Meanwhile ..." serves to expand on the growing dissension amongst the Tharks concerning Tarkas' role in Barsoom. Tarkas shows the heart of a warrior and the wisdom of a leader and retains his role but, amid the battle, betrays a human influence.

Frank Miller does an admirable job of filling in for Ernie Colon and is artistically closer to Gil Kane, Carmine Infantino, and Rudy Nebres.

Marvel
Nov 1978 • 17 pp.
Writer: Chris Claremont
Pencils: Frank Miller
Inks: Bob McLeod
Cover: Rudy Nebres

Near CGC copy: **9.8**

Then 35¢ NOW $3

	UNSLABBED Near Mint
3	2
3/35¢	15
4	2
4/35¢	15
5	2
5/35¢	15
6-29	2
Ann 1-3	2

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles
MIRAGE, 1984

1	300
1/Counterfeit	2
2	28
2/Counterfeit	2
3-3/Misprint	15
4	12
5	4
6	3
7	5
8	4
9-10	3
11	4
12-15	3
16-62	2

Teen Titans
DC, 1966

1	260
2	100
3-5	40
6-10	32
11-17	28
18-22	33
23-25	18
26-30	12
31	20
➥Giant-sized	
32-38	18
39-43	12
44-47	7
48	12
➥1st Harlequin	
49	7
50	20
➥Batgirl returns	
51-53	6

Thing
CHARLTON, 1952

1	735
2-4	585
5-9	540
10-14	390
15-17	295

Thing
MARVEL, 1983

1	6
2-10	2
11-13	1
14	2
15-36	1

Thor
MARVEL, 1966

126	125
127-140	45
141-160	32
161-164	25
165	40
➥Warlock app.	
166	36
167	24
➥Galactus origin	
168-169	36
➥Galactus origin	
170-177	20
178-179	18
180	24
➥Thor vs Mephisto	
181	23
182-192	12
193	55
➥Silver Surfer app.	
194-199	12
200	16
201-205	9
206-224	7
225	14
➥1st Firelord	
226	7
227-260	5
260/35¢	15
261	5
261/35¢	15
262	5
262/35¢	15
263	5
263/35¢	15
264	5
264/35¢	15
265-299	3
300	8
301-336	2
337	7
➥1st Beta Ray Bill	
338	3
339	5
340	4
341	3
342	4
343-348	2
349	3

350-373	2
374	3
375-400	2
401-410	1
411	3
412	2
413-431	1
432-433	2
434-449	1
450	3
451-473	1
474-475	2
475/Variant	3
476-481	2
482	3
483-499	2
500	3
501-502	2
Ann 2	65
Ann 3	12
Ann 4	10
Ann 5-6	8
Ann 7	7
Ann 8	6
Ann 9-12	4
Ann 13-19	3

Thrilling Comics
BETTER, 1940

1	2000
2	800
3	650
4-10	500
11-18	425
19	500
➥1st Amer Crusader	
20	425
21-30	350
31-40	310
41	700
➥Hitler cover	
42-52	270
53-70	225
71-80	90

THUNDER Agents
TOWER, 1965

1	140
2	75
3-5	55
6-8	42
9-10	35
11-15	38
16-19	22
20	15

Tomahawk
DC, 1950

1	850
2	400
3-5	290
6-10	195
11-20	125
21-27	100
28	110
29	130
➥Frazetta art	
30	90
31-40	70
41-50	56
51-56	45
57	85
➥Frazetta art	
58-60	40
61-80	32
81-90	25
91-100	15
101-110	10
111-120	8
121-132	6
133-140	5

Tomb of Dracula
MARVEL, 1972

1	100
2-3	35
4	30
5-6	18
7	15
8-9	12
10	100
➥1st Blade	
11	10
12	12
13	35
➥Blade origin	
14	12
15-16	10
17	12
18	10
19	12
20-21	10
22-29	8
30	10
31-32	8
33-41	7
42-43	6
43/30¢	18
44	6
44/30¢	18
45	6
45/30¢	18
46	6
46/30¢	18
47	6
47/30¢	18
48-49	6
50	10
51-57	6
57/35¢	12
58	6
58/35¢	12
59	6
59/35¢	12
60	6
60/35¢	12
61-69	5
70	8

Top-Notch Comics
M.L.J., 1939

1	3500
2	1500
3	1000
4	825
5	900
6-8	650
9	3000
➥1st Black Hood	
10	1000
➥2nd Black Hood	
11-15	625
16-20	550
21-30	425
31-45	250

Transformers
MARVEL, 1984

1	10
2-3	5
4-20	3
21-69	2
70-76	5
77-79	10
80	18

Turok, Son of Stone
DELL, 1956

3	155
4-5	125
6-7	110
7/15¢	135
8-10	110
11-20	75
21-30	48
31-40	38
41-50	28
51-60	22
61-70	15
71-90	10
91-110	8
111-130	6
GS 1	100

Twilight Zone
GOLD KEY, 1962

1	90
2	55
3	42
4-10	35
11-20	30
21-27	16
28-30	10
31-40	8
41-51	6
52-70	5
71-92	4

Two-Fisted Tales
E.C., 1950

18	700
19	500
20	325
21-22	260
23-25	210
26-30	160
31-35	130
36-41	115
Ann 1	550
Ann 2	400

Ultimates
MARVEL, 2002

1	7
2	9
3	6
4	10
5	8
6	7
7	6
8	5
9	6
10	4
11	3
12	2
13	4

Ultimates 2
MARVEL, 2005

1	5
1/2nd	3
1/Sketch	35
2-11	3
12	4
Ann 1-2	4

Ultimate Spider-Man
MARVEL, 2000

1/2	8
1/2/A	18
1	65
1/White	375
1/DF	175
1/Kay-Bee	4
1/FCBD	3
1/Checkers	7
1/Payless	6
1/Target	175
3	16
4	8
5	55
6	9
6/Niagara	35
7	9
8	8
8/Payless-10	6
11	5
12	4
13	5
14	4
15	5
16-21	3
22	4
23-26	3
27	4
28	3
29	4
30	3
31	4
32	3
33	4
34-46	3
47	4
48-49	3
50	4
53	3
60	8
61	5
62	8
63	5
➥Gwen Stacy returns	
64	4
65	5
66	2
67	3
68-71	2
72	4
73-77	2
78-99	3
100	5
Ann 1-2	3
SP 1	4

Ultimate X-Men
MARVEL, 2000

1/2	5
1	14
1/Sketch	20
1/DF	40
1/Checkers	30
1/NYPost	8
1/Universal	60
2	7
3	6
4-5	5
6-10	4
11-12	3
13	4
14	3

Flashback 1987

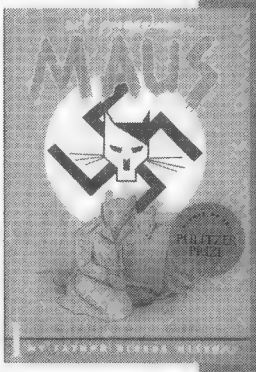
20 years ago in CBG...

#685 JANUARY 2 1987

Jo Duffy announced her departure from **Epic Comics**, where she had been serving as managing editor. Duffy told ***CBG*** the departure was amicable and cited time constraints for the decision.

#686 JANUARY 9 1987

Maus: A Survivor's Tale by **Art Spiegelman** received the first of numerous award nominations when it earned a nod from the National Book Critics Circle Award for Biography/Autobiography.



#687 JANUARY 16 1987

Comico announced it would launch the debut issue of its new series ***Star Blazers*** on April 17. Plans called for **Phil Foglio** to write with art by **Doug Rice** and **Mike Chen**.

#688 JANUARY 23 1987

The start of the long history of **Transformers** comics started with news of a four-issue series from **Marvel Comics**, slated to ship March 10. The "Robots in Disguise" comic received further attention from a nationwide television campaign sponsored by Hasbro Inc.

#1211 JANUARY 30 1997

DC Comics received the Publisher of the Year honor as part of the 1996 **Capital City Awards**. It was led by Title of the Year ***Dark Knight***.

— By Ray Sidman
from the Comics Buyer's Guide archives

	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66
		"Acts of Vengeance"; FF #1 cover homage on #54		Psycho Scarlet Witch					Immortus appears		1st Living Lightning	Capt. America appears		Fights Ultron
NM	DEC 89	JAN 90	FEB 90	MAR 90	APR 90	MAY 90	JUN 90	JUL 90	AUG 90	SEP 90	OCT 90	NOV 90	DEC 90	JAN 91
Price	$1	$1	$1	$8	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1

U.T.F. #1

Vampires have taken over the Los Angeles County Jail, which ain't gonna be good for no one. The U.T.F. (Undead Task Force) is recalled from battling zombies in New Orleans. Of course, the current crisis must be subdued without alerting the public to the *existence* of zombies, vamps, and the like.

APE
WRITER:
SCOTT REYNOLDS
ARTIST:
TONE RODRIGUEZ
Color • 32 Pgs.
$2.99

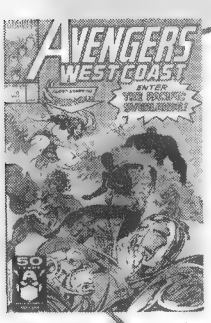
The premise reads like a schlocky B-movie but it's pulled off surprisingly well. (And it might not make a half-bad movie, at that!) The pacing is also pretty good for a 23-page installment. The story starts with the jail uprising, then flashes back to how the vampire found his way to prison in the first place. Cut to the U.T.F. kicking undead zombie butt in the Big Easy, and then the whole thing comes full circle.

The art is enjoyable. While definitely too violent for the young 'uns, it's no more gratuitous than actually called for. The grossest shot is the blood-soaked mouth of the vampire boss but that is necessary to establish what he's capable of doing.

U.T.F. reads better than a synopsis might suggest.

★★½ — Jack Abramowitz

www.apecomics.com



▲ #70

AVENGERS WEST COAST

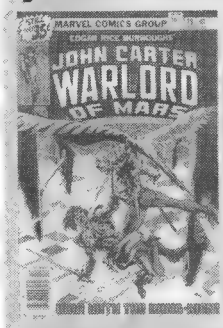
An arachnid Avenger

As far back as *Avengers* #11 (Dec 64), Earth's Mightiest Heroes had been after Spider-Man to join their stalwart group. While The Wallcrawler eventually became a reserve member (and, later, a New Avenger), it was Spider-Woman who joined the West Coast team.

Image © 1991 Marvel

	UNSLABBED Near Mint
Ultimate X-Men CONTINUED	
15	4
16-17	3
18	5
19	4
20-26	3
27-32	2
33	5
34	4
40	2
41	5
42	4
43-49	2
50	5
50/Conv	15
51-59	2
60-61	3
61/Coipel	5
62-74	3
Ann 1-2	4
Uncanny X-Men MARVEL, 1970	
-1	2
142 ➥Future Past	25
143	8
144	6
145	7
146-148	6
149-157	5
158 ➥Rogue app.	6
159-161	5
162	6
163-166	5
167 ➥Rogue joins team	4
168-175	5
176-177	4
178	5
179	4
180	3
181	4
182-183	5
184-186	4
187-188	3
189-190	4
191	5
192	4
193	5
194-199	3
200	6
201 ➥Portacio art	5
202-209	4
210-211 ➥Wolv. vs. Sabretooth	5
212-213 ➥Wolv vs. Sabretooth	8
214-215	3
216	4
217-218	3
219-220	4
221 ➥1st Mr. Sinister	7
222 ➥Wolv. vs. Sabretooth	5
223	4
224-231	3
232	4
233-243	3
244 ➥1st Jubilee	5
245-247	3
248 ➥1st Jim Lee X-Men	5
249-258	3
259	4
260-265	3
266 ➥1st Gambit	14
267-268	6
269	3
270	4
271-280	3
281	2
282	3
283	5
284	4
285	3
286	2
287	3
288-291	2
292	3
293	2
294/Collector's	3
295/Collector's	2
296/Collector's	3
297-299	2
300	3
301-302	2
303	3
304-306	2
307	5
308-328	2
329	4
330-352	2
353	3
354-362	2
363	4
364	3
365-378	2
379	3
380-381	2
381/DF	7
382-386	2
387	3
388-403	2
404	4
405-415	2
416	3
417-429	2
430-438	3
439	2
440-441	3
442	2
443	3
444	4
445-449	2
450 ➥1st X-23	7
451 ➥X-23 app	6
452	3
453-454	2
455	4
456-461	2
461/Kubert ➥House of M	15
462-478	3
Ann 1	50
Ann 2	45
Ann 3	14
Ann 4	6
Ann 5	5
Ann 6	7
Ann 7	5
Ann 8	4
Ann 9	10
Ann 10	8
Ann 11-12	4
Ann 13	3
Ann 14	6
Ann 15	4
Ann 16	2
Ann 17-18	3
Ann '95-'98	3
Ann '00-'01	4

RETROVIEW
John Carter #19 ★★★



"Master Assassin of Mars, Part 4: The Valiant Die But Once"

Dejah Thoris "spurns" John Carter. Carter and Garathon defend the city against a Ptothian attack and face certain death.

Hopeless battle? Certain death? Call Carter. Yes, folks, Carter is never far from a hopeless situation. This issue, he faces a horde of Ptothians, without reinforcements. And Dejah Thoris seems to have chosen Chan Tomar over Carter.

Marvel
Dec 1978 • 17 pp.
Writer: Chris Claremont
Pencils: Ernie Colon
Inks: Frank Springer
Cover: Colon, Rudy Nebres

Chris Claremont has built a deep story with themes of deception, strength of character, and "nobility," just as ERB would have. The Frank Springer inks bring out the "savage" in Carter, especially in the last panel.

© ERB, Inc.

Near CGC copy **9.6** **Then 35c NOW $3**

	UNSLABBED Near Mint
Uncle Sam DC, 1997	
1-2	5
Uncle Sam Quarterly QUALITY, 1941	
1	1500
2	750
3	600
4	550
5-8	500
Uncle Scrooge DELL, 1953	
4	310
5	220
6-7	185
8	140
9-10	125
11-15	100
16-20	80
21-30	65
31-40	55
41-50	45
51-70	40
71	38
72-100	32
101-120	20
121-140	18
141-160	12
161-171	10
172-176	15
177-178	25
179	225
180	35
181-185	15
186-197	10
198	15
199-200	10
201-219	6
220-240	5
241-260	4
261-299	3
300-308	2
309-318	7
Uncle Scrooge GEMSTONE, 2003	
319-349	7
Unknown Soldier DC, 1977	
205-210	5
211-229	4
230-247	3
248-249	5
250-267	3
268	5
USA Comics TIMELY, 1941	
1	12000
2	4400
3	3100
4-5	2500
6	3550
7	3400
8-10	2250
11-12	1500
13-17	1250
Vampirella WARREN, 1969	
1	325
2	125
3	200
4-5	75
6-9	70
10	30
11-15	43
16-25	30
26	20
27	30
28-36	25
37-45	20
46	25
47-50	20
51-70	17
71-99	16
100	30
101-111	16
112	45
113	195
Ann 1	175
Special 1	30
Vault of Horror E.C., 1950	
12	4000
13	800
14	725
15	600
16	500
17-19	360
20-25	275
26-30	225
31-40	185
Villains United DC, 2005	
1	12
1/2nd	8
1/3rd	3
2	5
3-5	3
6	4
Wacky Races GOLD KEY, 1969	
1	40
2	26
3-7	20
Walking Dead IMAGE, 2003	
1	35
2	32
3	15
4	12
4/A	6
5	4
6-31	3
Walt Disney's Comics and Stories DELL, 1940	
1	20000
2	7500
3	3400
4	2050
5	1250
6-7	1100
8-9	900
10	850
11-15	750
16-17	650
18	625
19-30	580
31 ➥Barks Donald starts	3700
32	2000
33	1200
34	950
35-36	840
37	435
38	650
39-40	580
41-46	500
47-50	475
51-60	375
61-70	305
71-80	240
81-87	215
88	270
89-90	210
91-97	190
98 ➥Unc. Scrooge starts	365
99	190
100	200
101-112	155
113-116	90
117	130
118-123	85
124	130
125	190
126-129	130
130-133	125
134	200
135-139	105
140 ➥1st Barks Gyro	225
141-150	94
151-170	88

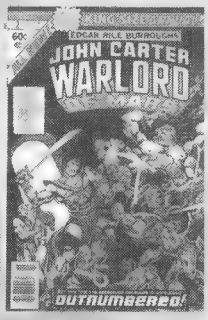
PRICE GUIDE KEY: OTHER GRADES

Unslabbed (loose) Very Fine/Near Mint is **5/6 (83%)** of the unslabbed NM price above
Very Fine (VF) is **2/3 (67%)** of NM
Fine (F) is **1/3 (33%)** of NM
Very Good (VG) is **1/5 (20%)** of NM
Good (G) is **1/8 (12.5%)** of NM

Spider-Woman appears ▼ $1.50 cover ▼

NM Price	67 FEB 91 $1	68 MAR 91 $1	69 APR 91 $1	70 MAY 91 $1	71 JUN 91 $1	72 JUL 91 $1	73 AUG 91 $1	74 SEP 91 $1	75 OCT 91 $2	76 NOV 91 $1

John Carter Annual #2 ★★★



© ERB, Inc.

Marvel
1978 • 34 pp.
Writer: Bill Mantlo
Pencils: Ernie Chan
Inks: Chan
Cover: Chan

"Gale"

John Carter faces The Headmen of Mars, and the evil creations of Ras Thavas, The Mastermind of Mars.

Bill Mantlo, in "Gale," adapted parts of *The Mastermind of Mars* and turned an offshoot into an enjoyable, well-thought-out tale.

In the story, Carter finds himself allied with two Ras Thavas cast-offs. However, one of them, The White Ape, discovers his lost body and love and attacks Tal Tarag. In the interim, Carter escapes and plans revenge for his newly found and lost friends. In the Barsoomian tales, Carter always sided with the "right" and, by doing so, remained true to himself.

Then 60¢ NOW $2

CGC copy: 9.8

UNSLABBED Near Mint

171-200 80
201-240 75
241-260 60
261-283 50
284-285 25
286 28
287 25
288-289 28
290 25
291-293 28
294-296 25
297-308 28
309-311 25
312 28
313-334 14
335 25
336-341 14
342-351 25
351/Poster 30
351/No poster 20
352 25
352/Poster 30
352/No poster 20
353 25
353/Poster 30
353/No poster 20
354 25
354/Poster 30
354/No poster 20
355 25
355/Poster 30
355/No poster 20
356 25
356/Poster 30
356/No poster 20
357 25
357/Poster 30
357/No poster 20
358 25
358/Poster 30
358/No poster 20
359 25
359/Poster 30
359/No poster 20
360 25
360/Poster 30
360/No poster 20
361-400 25
401-429 14
430 10
431-432 12
433 10
434-436 12
437-438 10
439-440 12
441-443 10
444-445 6
446-465 10
466 6
467-478 10
479 30
480 125
481-484 30
485-510 10
511 15
512-513 12
514-516 8
517-518 5
519 14
520-549 10
550 6
551-554 4
555-556 3
557-573 4
574-577 5
578-579 3
580 5
581-584 3
585 5
586-597 3
598-599 4
600-611 6
612-648 7

Walt Disney's Comics & Stories
GEMSTONE, 2003
634-661 7

Wanted
IMAGE, 2003
1 12
1/A 9
1/B 8
1/C 3
1/D 6
1/E 5
2 3
2/B 4
2/C 5
3 3
3/A 4
4-6 3

War
CHARLTON, 1975
1 8
2-10 5
11-22 3
23-49 2

War Is Hell
MARVEL, 1973
1 25
2 18
3-5 14
6-8 10
9-15 8

Warlock
MARVEL, 1972
1 32
2-3 15
4-5 8
6-8 7
9-11 10
12 8
12/30¢ 15
13 8
13/30¢ 15
14 8
14/30¢ 15
15 8

Watchmen
DC, 1986
1 8
2-3 5
4-12 4

Web of Horror
MAJOR MAGAZINES, 1969
1 90
2 55
3 65
➥1st Wrightson cvr

Web of Spider-Man
MARVEL, 1985
1 8
2 6
3 5
4-10 4
11-28 3
29 5
30 4
31-32 5
33-35 3
36 4
37 3
38 5
39-47 3
48 8
49 2
50 3
51-57 2
58 3
59 8
60-61 3
62-89 2
90 5
91-99 2
100 4
101-105 2
106/Collector's 5
106 1
107-113 2
113/Collector's 4
114-116 2
117 3
117/Variant 5
118 3
119 2
119/Collector's 6
120 4
121-124 2
125 3
125/Variant 4
126-129 2
129/Collector's 5
Ann 1 7
Ann 2 6
Ann 3-10 3
SS 1 4

Weird Fantasy
E.C., 1950
1 1150
2 500
3-4 425
5 335
6-10 240
11-13 180
14 300
15 200
16-19 170
20 200
21 285
22 140

Weird Mystery Tales
DC, 1972
1 30
2 20
3 15
4-10 12
11-20 10
21 15
22-24 10

Weird Science
E.C., 1950
1 1450
2 625
3-4 575
5-10 360
11-14 230
15-18 260
19-22 335

Weird Science-Fantasy
E.C., 1954
23-24 235
25 270
26 220
27 235
28 260
29 450

Weird Suspense
ATLAS-SEABOARD, 1975
1 12
2 8
3 7

Weird Terror
COMIC MEDIA, 1952
1 500
2-4 300
5 230
6 260
7 230
8 260
9-10 200
11 260
12 190
13 200

Weird War Tales
DC, 1971
1 125
2 75
3 45
4-5 30
6-10 20
11-20 12
21-31 8
32-50 6
51-92 5
93 6
94-101 5
102-124 4

Weird Western Tales
DC, 1972
12 45
13 30
14-15 20
16-28 12
29 16
30-42 8
43-50 6
51-70 5

Weird Wonder Tales
MARVEL, 1973
1 14
2-3 7
4-7 5
8-15 4
15/30¢ 20
16 4
16/30¢ 20
17 4
17/30¢ 20
18-22 4

Weird Worlds
DC, 1972
1 12
2-5 7
6 8
7 6
8-10 5

Wendy, the Good Little Witch
HARVEY, 1960
1 60
2 40
3-5 28
6-10 22
11-15 14
16-20 12
21-25 8
26-30 6
31-40 5
41-50 4
51-60 3
61-93 2
94-97 1

Werewolf By Night
MARVEL, 1972
1 80
2 30
3 15
4 18
5-10 15
11-14 12
15 15
16-17 12
18-20 10
21-31 8
32 60
➥1st Moon Knight
33 30
34 8
35-36 5
37 10
38 5
38/30¢ 15
39 5
39/30¢ 15
40-41 5
42 12
43 18

What If...?
MARVEL, 1977
1 15
2 10
3-5 8
6-10 5
11-12 4
13 5
14-15 4
16 3
17 4
18-26 3
27 5
28 8
29 3
30-31 8
32-34 3
35 5
36-45 3
46 4
47 3
Special 1 4

What If...?
MARVEL, 1989
-1 2
1 4
2-20 3
21-23 2
24 4
25 3
26-49 2
50 3
51-104 2
105 12
106-113 2
114 3

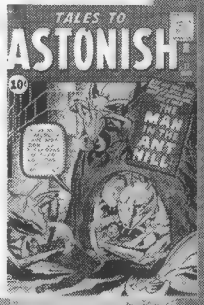
Wheelie and the Chopper Bunch
CHARLTON, 1975
1 20
➥Incl. Byrne art
2 12
3-7 10

Ultimate-Wheelie

Other Flashbacks

On this date...

JAN 1940 A trio of characters whose legends had yet to grow were introduced on this date in ***Flash Comics*** #1: **The Flash** (**Jay Garrick**), **Hawkman**, and **Johnny Thunder**.



JAN 1962 A costume-less **Ant-Man** first appeared in ***Tales to Astonish*** #27.

Also this month, the warrior alien race **The Skrulls** first appeared in ***Fantastic Four*** #2.

JAN 1965 One of the baddies from Spider-Man's rogues gallery made his first appearance in ***Amazing Spider-Man*** #20, with the debut of **The Scorpion**.

JAN 1980 One of the younger X-Men first appeared in ***X-Men*** #129. **Kitty Pryde** phased into the comic under the name of Ariel.

JAN 1980 On this date, interstellar traveller and mayhem creator **Lobo** first tore his way through the DC universe in ***Omega Men*** #10.

— By Ray Sidman
from the Comics Buyer's Guide archives

	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
			Goes to $1.25	"Operation: Galactic Storm"				Origin of Spider-Woman	Spider-Man appears				Fights Ultron	
NM Price	DEC 91 $1	JAN 92 $1	FEB 92 $1	MAR 92 $1	APR 92 $1	MAY 92 $1	JUN 92 $1	JUL 92 $1	AUG 92 $1	SEP 92 $1	OCT 92 $1	NOV 92 $1	DEC 92 $1	JAN 93 $1

Wolverine #45

Wolverine fights Namor over the right to kill Nitro, the bad guy who started Marvel's "Civil War" event, which included the death of Namor's cousin Namorita. Namor actually goes all "Imperius Rex" on Wolvie's butt, which is realistic.

Namor's faced The Thing and The Hulk and can last a few rounds with Thor — he can take Wolverine.

Later, Wolverine realizes it's not his place to kill Nitro — it's Namor's. In the end, the pair learn who Nitro's benefactor is.

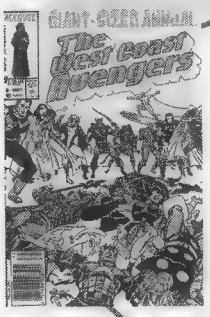
MARVEL
WRITER:
MARC GUGGENHEIM
ARTIST:
HUMBERTO RAMOS
Color • 32 Pgs.
$2.99

The story, which is standard Marvel (good guy vs. good guy over the fate of bad guy) seems like it could've ended in half an issue rather than take up a full issue. Humberto Ramos' art is too exaggerated in places, especially when it comes to Wolverine's height, build, and hair.

Marc Guggenheim writes Namor well. Hey, Marvel, don't you think it's time to give him another crack at a monthly series? Namor is one of your earliest characters after all. John Byrne only began to unlock Namor's potential with the eponymous 1990s series. It's time for another Namor monthly series, provided they move the character forward.

★★½ — **Kurt A. Krug**

www.marvel.com



Ann. #2

AVENGERS WEST COAST

Following big brother

The first two West Coast Avengers Annuals simply followed the events of, respectively, *Avengers Annuals* #15 and #16. Later annuals, which would take the series' title change to *Avengers West Coast* would tie in to each year's "event."

Image © 1987 Marvel

THE BOTTOM LINE

	UNSLABBED Near Mint
Where Creatures Roam MARVEL, 1970	
1	25
2-8	10
Where Monsters Dwell MARVEL, 1970	
1	32
2-5	10
6-11	8
12	10
13-31	8
32-38	7
Whiz Comics FAWCETT, 1940	
1	70000
➥1st Captain Marvel	
2	5200
3	3400
4	2800
5	2250
6	1650
7	1725
8-9	1650
10	1250
11-12	1100
13-14	1075
15	1250
16-18	1100
19-20	750
21	800
22-24	600
25	6200
➥1st Capt. Marvel Jr	
26	550
27-30	525
31-32	460
33	525
34	365
35	410
36-40	365
41-43	260
44	300
45-50	260
51-60	210
61-70	175
71-82	150
83-100	130
101-120	110
121-152	100
153-155	200
WildC.A.T.s IMAGE, 1992	
0	3
1	4
1/3D	5
1/Gold	10
1/Variant	5
2	4
3-10	3
11	15
11/Holofoil	22
12	8
13	6
14-24	3
25	5
26-49	3
50	4
50/Variant	5
Ann 1	3
Special 1	4
Wild Frontier CHARLTON, 1955	
1	60
2-6	40
7	50
Witchblade IMAGE, 1995	
1/2	15
1	25
1/B	15
2	18
2/A	15
3	10
4-5	8
6-7	6
8-10	5
10/DF	20
11-14	4
14/Gold	6
15	4
16-18/A	3
19-25	3
25/A	4
25/B	8
25/C	15
26-49	3
50	5
50/DF	15
51-74	3
75-75/Variant	5
76-80	3
80/Holiday	5
80/Cho-80/Land	3
80/Conv	5
81-99	3
100	5
101	3
500	5
Witches Tales HARVEY, 1951	
1	310
2	260
3-10	210
11-16	190
17-19	225
20-24	190
25-28	165
Witching Hour DC, 1969	
1	150
2	70
3	50
4-6	25
7	18
8-13	15
14-51	10
52-66	8
67-85	5
Wolverine MARVEL, 1982	
1	25
2	18
3	17
4	16
Wolverine MARVEL, 1988	
-1	2
1/2	3
1/2/Ltd.	8
1	10
2	6
3-5	5
6	4
7-9	5
10	8
11-14	4
15	5
16-19	4
20	5
21-23	4
24-40	3
41	4
42	2
43	3
44	2
45-49	3
50	4
51-56	2
57	3
58-74	2
75	4
76-79	2
80	8
81-84	2
85	3
85/Variant	4
86-87	2
87/Deluxe	4
88	2
88/Deluxe	4
89	2
89/Deluxe	4
90	2
90/Deluxe	4
91-98	2
99	4
100	5
100/Variant	8
101-124	2
125	4
125/A-125/B	10
126-130	2
131	5
131/A	3
132-133	2
133/Variant	4
134-144	2
145	4
145/Gold foil	25
145/DF	50
145/Silver foil	30
145/Nabisco	400
146	5
147-149	2
150	3
150/DF	14
151-165	2
166	3
167-189	2
Ann 1995	4
Ann '96-'97	3
Ann '99-'00	4
Ann 2001	3
Special 1	4
Wolverine MARVEL, 2003	
1	7
2	5
3	4
4-9	3
10	2
11-15	3
16	2
17	3
18-20	2
20/Variant	90
➥Retailer incentive	
20/Texas	20
➥Texas con premium	
21-26	2
26/Silvestri	15
26/DF	20
27	2
27/Quesada	25
28-29	2
30-35	3
36	5
36/Quesada	12
37-46	3
Wolverine: Origins MARVEL, 2006	
1-6	3
Wolverine: The End MARVEL, 2004	
1	7
1/Texas	15
2	6
3	5
4	4
5-6	3
Wolverine: The Origin MARVEL, 2001	
1	25
1/DF	50
2	12
2/DF	24
Wolverine: The Origin CONTINUED	
3	8
3/DF	20
4	5
4/DF	20
5	4
5/DF	20
6	5
6/DF	20
Wonder Woman DC, 1942	
1	17000
2	3100
3	1900
4	1200
5	1050
6-10	900
11-20	650
21-23	450
24	600
25	450
26-30	425
31-40	415
41-44	400
45	500
46-50	400
51-60	310
61-70	240
71-79	190
80-90	155
91-100	120
101-104	90
105	600
➥1st Wonder Girl	
106-110	80
111-130	70
131-149	56
150-159	50
160-161	30
162	40
163-170	30
171-180	25
181-190	33
191-200	40
201-210	14
211	25
➥100-page issue	
212-213	11
214	30
➥100-page issue	
215-218	11
219-236	7
237-260	6
261-268	5
269-279	4
280	3
281-283	5
284-299	3
300	6
301-329	3
Wonder Woman DC, 1987	
0	6
1	4
2-10/A	3
11-84	2
85	10
➥1st Deodato art	
86	4
87-93	3
94-99	2
100	3
100/Variant	4
101-119	2
120	3
121-199	2
200	4
201-213	2
214	25

RetroView

MARVEL® AND DC® PRESENT™

Reviewed by Brent Frankenhoff

Beginning with *Superman vs. The Amazing Spider-Man* in 1976, DC and Marvel's biggest heroes teamed up against similar teams of villains.

By 1982, several such pairings had been published with a rumored Avengers/Justice League of America crossover in the works. While that event didn't come to pass for another two decades, Marvel and DC did team two of their other groups, The Uncanny X-Men and The New Teen Titans, in the aptly named *Marvel and DC Present Featuring The Uncanny X-Men and The New Teen Titans.*

Marvel and DC Present ™ Marvel and DC

COST TO OWN THE ORIGINALS IN NM: $12

PRICE GUIDE KEY: OTHER GRADES

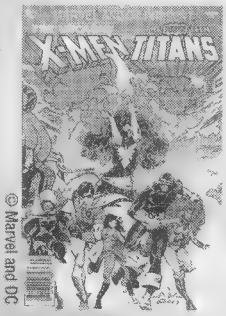
Unslabbed (loose) Very Fine/Near Mint is **5/6 (83%)** of the unslabbed NM price above
Very Fine (VF) is **2/3 (67%)** of NM
Fine (F) is **1/3 (33%)** of NM
Very Good (VG) is **1/5 (20%)** of NM
Good (G) is **1/8 (12.5%)** of NM

Darkhawk appears

"Infinity Crusade"

	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98
	FEB 93	MAR 93	APR 93	MAY 93	JUN 93	JUL 93	AUG 93	SEP 93
NM Price	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1	$1

Marvel and DC Present #1 ★★★½



© Marvel and DC

Marvel and DC
1982 • 66 pp.
Writer: Chris Claremont
Pencils: Walter Simonson
Inks: Terry Austin
Cover: Simonson, Austin

"Apokolips Now"

The Teen Titans and The X-Men attempt to stop Darkseid's plot to turn Earth into a new Apokolips.

Most of the other DC/Marvel crossovers have featured a pair of heroes facing a pair of villains (Superman and Spider-Man vs. Lex Luthor and Doc Ock or Batman and Hulk vs. Joker and Shaper of Worlds). This time around, Darkseid seems to be the only villain, with Dark Phoenix thrown into the mix even though she's not truly a villain, but more a force of nature.

While portions of Chris Claremont's script are predictable and clichéd, he does an admirable job of introducing all the players.

Dual CBG copy **9.8** Then $2 **NOW $12**

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UNSLABBED Near Mint

80/Hotofoil 10
80/DF 7
81-98 2
99-100/G 3
101-104 2
105. 3
106-113 2
114. 5
115-144 2
145-147 3
148. 2
149. 3
150. 4
151. 3
152. 2
153-157 3
158. 2
159. 3
160-164 2
165. 3
166-169 2
170-Ann 3 3
Ann 1995 4
Ann '96-'98 . . . 3
Ann '99-'01 . . . 4
Ashcan 1 1

Young Allies Comics
TIMELY, 1941
1. 11500
2. 3000
3. 2100
4. 3000
5. 1300
6-8 875
9. 900

10. 875
11-14 720
15-20 615

Young Men
MARVEL, 1950
4. 120
5-10 70
11-23 52
24. 1600
➥Cap, Namor origin
25. 775
26-28 750

Y: The Last Man
DC, 2002
1. 30
2. 15
3. 5
4-5 4

6-49 3

Zero Hour: Crisis in Time
DC, 1994
4-2 2
1. 3
0. 2
Ashcan 1 1

Zorro
DELL, 1959
8-9 70
10-12 68
13-15 65

Zorro
GOLD KEY, 1966
1. 70
2-4 38
5-7 34
8-9 28

Zorro
MARVEL, 1990
1. 3
2-12 2

UNSLABBED Near Mint

➥Inf. Crisis tie
215. 10
216. 7
217. 6
218. 5
219. 15
➥Max Lord dies
219/2nd 3
➥2nd print
220. 12
221-1000000 . . 3
Ann 1-2 2
Ann 3 3
Ann 4 4
Ann 5 3
Ann 6 4
Ann 7-8 3
Special 1 2

Woody Woodpecker
DELL, 1952
16-20 14
21-50 12
51-72 9
73-75 25
76-100 15
101-120 10
121-130 6
131-170 3
171-187 2
188-189 10
190-191 25
193-201 15

World's Best Comics
DC, 1941
1. 18000

World's Finest Comics
DC, 1941
2. 4000
3. 2900
4-5 1975
6-7 1450
8. 1275
9. 1300
10. 1050
11-16 895
17. 875
18-20 805
21-30 610

31-40 530
41-60 430
61-64 320
65. 540
66-70 370
71. 900
➥1st Sup/Bat team
72-73 550
74-80 375
81-90 235
91-93 175
94. 525
➥Sup/Bat team origin
95-99 175
100. 260
101-110 105
111-121 85
122-142 75
143-150 52
151-152 50
153-155 45
156. 55
➥Bizarro, Joker app
157-161 45
162-177 38
178-180 30
181-190 25
191-197 20
➥Sup/Flash race
198-199 80
➥Sup/Flash race
200-212 16
213-228 14
229-270 6
271-300 4
301-323 3

Worlds of Fear
FAWCETT, 1952
2. 325
3. 250
4-9 200
10. 475

Worlds Unknown
MARVEL, 1973
1. 17
2. 10
3. 7
4-8 5

Wulf the Barbarian
ATLAS-SEABOARD, 1975
1. 12
2. 9
3-4 8

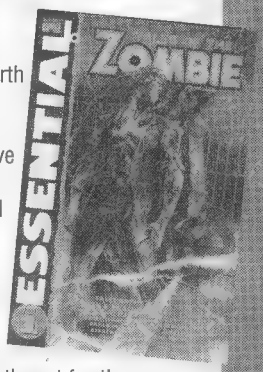
Xenozoic Tales
KITCHEN SINK, 1987
1. 8
2-5 6
6-10 5
11-14 4

X-Men
MARVEL, 1963
1. 7000
➥1st X-Men
2. 1900
3. 1030
4. 900
5. 550
6. 500
7. 475
8-10 360
11. 300
12. 500
➥1st Juggernaut
13. 275
14. 250
15-16 190
17-20 100
21-27 90
28. 155
➥1st Banshee
29-34 90
35. 150
➥Spider-Man app.
36-37 65
38. 80
39-40 90
41-48 65
49-51 75
52. 65
53-57 72
58. 100
➥1st Havok
59-65 70
66. 80
➥Last new issue
67-80 35
81-85 40
86-93 35
94. 500
➥2nd New X-Men
95. 85
➥Thunderbird dies
96. 55
97-98 48
98/30¢ 125
99. 48
99/30¢ 125
100. 60
➥Phoenix orig. starts
100/30¢ 135
101. 55
➥Phoenix origin
102-105 28
105/35¢ 60
106. 28
106/35¢ 60
107. 28
107/35¢ 60
108. 35
➥1st Byrne X-Men
109. 30
➥1st Weapon alpha
110-115 20
116-119 16
➥1st Alpha Flight
120-121 28
122-128 12
129. 20
➥1st Kitty, E. Frost
130-135 12
136. 11
137. 14
➥Phoenix dies.
138. 8
139-141 11
➥Future Past

X-Men
MARVEL, 1991
-1 3
-1/A 4
1/Beast 5
1/Colossus 3
1/Cyclops 4
1/Magneto 3
1/Collector's . . . 5
2. 4
3-20 3
21-24 2
25. 5
25/Gold 25
25/Museum . . . 30
26-29 2
30. 3
31-49 2
50. 3
50/Variant 4
51-54 2
54/Silver 25
55-62 2
62/A 3
63-79 2
80. 3

Tony's Back Page

"I Killed a Zombie...Twice!"



Previously: My last act as editor of Marvel's *Tales of the Zombie* was to send my and Chris Claremont's scripts for what was intended to be the final Simon Garth story to the Philippines to be drawn by artists there. Since the story was scheduled for what was supposed to be the magazine's final issue, we'd written a definitive ending to the series. Garth, the soulless man who had been murdered and turned into a zombie, was restored to life for one day to take care of unfinished business. In the end, he found his soul and earned his eternal rest.

Imagine my surprise, weeks later, when incoming editor Don McGregor called me wondering where the final chapter of the three-part story was. He'd received the art for the other parts from the Philippines, but there was no record of their getting the script for or drawing the end chapter. Worse, with the deadline for the issue mere days away, I couldn't find my copy of the script.

With Don's blessing, I called in a crew of weekend warriors to come to the Marvel offices and finish that final chapter. I rewrote my script, handing the pages to artists Ron Wilson and Pablo Marcos as I finished them. My memory is uncertain, but my crew included Mike Esposito, Frank Giacoia, Alan Kupperberg, and Duffy Vohland. I'm pretty sure Joe Rosen lettered the first and last pages. I can't recall exactly how many hours we worked, but, come Monday morning, we'd killed the Zombie for the second time.

Imagine my surprise when *Tales of the Zombie* was then un-canceled and it was decided that Simon Garth should be un-canceled, as well. Gerry Conway wrote "The Partial Resurrection of Simon Garth," but the art for that 30-page story never made it to the Marvel offices in time for the next and, ironically, last issue of the magazine.

Simon would stay dead … for at least a little longer.

Save for the Conway effort — Did it ever appear? — all of the Simon Garth tales can be found in Marvel's *Essential Tales of the Zombie* Vol. 1 ($16.95), along with a heaping helping of other frightening-but-fun stories and articles.

— Tony Isabella

	99	100	101	102	Ann. 1	Ann. 2	Ann. 3	Ann. 4	Ann. 5	Ann. 6	Ann. 7	Ann. 8
	Hangman, Lethal Legion appear	Sculpted foil cover		Final issue	Follows *Avengers Annuals* #15 and #16, respectively		"Evolutionary War"	"Atlantis Attacks"	"Terminus Factor"	"Subterranean Wars"	"Assault on Armor City"	Trading card
	OCT 93	NOV 93	DEC 93	JAN 94	CA. 86	CA. 87	CA. 88	CA. 89	CA. 90	CA. 91	CA. 92	CA. 93
NM Price	$1	$1	$1	$1	$2	$2	$2	$2	$2	$2	$2	$3

ENTERTAINMENT CARDS MARKET REPORT

by RAY SIDMAN

Avengers: Update!

Collectors can look for a slew of inserts in the new *Marvel Heroes: The Complete Avengers* from Rittenhouse Archives. The 81-card set featuring Captain America, Thor, and the rest of Marvel's popular team, was released on Nov. 29.

Each pack sells for a retail of $2.10.

Inserts include:

• nine "Greatest Enemies" at one in every 10 packs

• nine "Legendary Heroes" at one in every 40 packs

• a hand-drawn colored sketch card in each box.

Also, Rittenhouse has said that it guarantees a colored sketch card in every box.

A fifth of *Smallville*

Slated for a December release from Inkworks is the *Smallville: Season Five* trading card set. The 90-card set will sell in packs of seven cards for $2.49 per pack.

Eleven actors are featured in the autograph cards inserted at one per box, including James Marsters (Brainiac) and Tom Wopat (Sen. Jack Jennings).

Piecework cards — also available at one per box — show a variety of clothing worn by such *Smallville* characters as Clark Kent, Lex Luthor, Lana Lang, and Jonathan and Martha Kent.

Collectors can also assemble a nine-card foil puzzle — one card per 11 packs, and "The Price of Life," six foil cards at one in every 17 packs.

Upcoming releases

• Dec. 13 — Battlestar Galactica Season Two (Rittenhouse)

• January — Hellboy Animated Sword of Storms (Inkworks)

• Jan. 2 — Xena: Dangerous Liaisons (Rittenhouse)

• February — Veronica Mars Season Two (Inkworks)

• Feb. 21 — Stargate SG-1 Season Nine (Rittenhouse)

• April — Shrek the Third (Inkworks)

Battlestar Galactica Premiere Edition
Rittenhouse Archives 2005

Set (72)	14.00
Roll Call Set (9)	20.00
Cylon Threat (9)	45.00
Quotable (9)	80.00
Sketch Card Case Topper	60.00
Tricia Helfer Costume	35.00
Katee Sackhoff Costume	30.00
Grace Park Costume	30.00
Katee Sackhoff Costume	30.00
Jamie Bamber Costume	20.00
Edward James Olmos Cost.	20.00
Michael Hogan Costume	20.00
Tricia Helfer Autograph	150.00
Katee Sackhoff Autograph	125.00
Aaron Douglas Autograph	25.00
Michael Hogan Autograph	25.00
Other Autographs	20.00

Battlestar Galactica Colonial Warriors
Rittenhouse Archives 2006

Set (72)	14.00
1978 Expansion Card	2.00
Casting Call Set (9)	55.00
Scalf ArtiFex Set (9)	85.00
Lorne Greene Tribute	85.00
Dirk Benedict Costume	25.00
Lorne Greene Costume	20.00
Herb Jefferson Jr. Costume	20.00
Spector Costume	25.00
Richard Hatch Costume	25.00
Jane Seymour Costume	50.00
Terry Carter Costume	20.00
Richard Hatch Costume	20.00
Greene/Hatch Costume Multi-Case Incentive	125.00
Dirk Benedict Auto Cost	100.00
Herb Jefferson Auto. Cost	80.00
Alex Hyde-White Case Topper	50.00
Anne Lockhart signed	40.00
Ed Begley Jr signed	25.00
Christine Belford signed	15.00
Arlene Martel signed	20.00
Britt Ekland signed	125.00
Richard Lynch signed	15.00
Melody Anderson signed	30.00
Randolph Mantooth signed	25.00
Other autographs	5.00

Firefly
Inkworks 2006

Set (72)	14.00
Firefly Forever Set (9)	40.00
Battle of Serenity (6)	35.00
Partners Boxtopper Set (3)	20.00
Nathan Fillion Autograph	80.00
Gina Torres Autograph	60.00
Morena Baccarin Autograph	80.00
Adam Baldwin Autograph	65.00
Jewel Staite Autograph	80.00
Sean Maher Autograph	55.00
Ron Glass Autograph	45.00
Michael Fairman Autograph	40.00
Gregg Henry Autograph	40.00
Christina Hendricks Auto	50.00
Jonathan M. Woodward Auto	45.00

Harry Potter Memorable Moments
Artbox 2006

Set (72)	16.00
Boxtoppers (4)	20.00
Foil (9)	40.00
Case Topper Motion	35.00
Coin	8.00
Gold Para Coin Set (case incentive)	55.00
Tom Riddle's Diary	100.00
Christmas Cards	100.00
Moon, Star Christmas Orna	125.00
Dan Radcliffe shirt, grim fur	225.00
Jamie Waylett robe	25.00
Harry Melling costume	20.00
Josh Herdman costume	25.00
Rupert Grint dual costume	55.00
James, Oliver Phelps dual cost	80.00
Josh Herdman dual costume	40.00
S. Janevski, R. Pattinson dual	75.00
C. Posey, A. Mandy dual cost	80.00
Richard Rosson signed cost	60.00
Eric Sykes autograph	80.00
David Bradley autograph	80.00
Maggie Smith autograph	400.00

James Bond Dangerous Liasons
Rittenhouse Archives 2006

Set (110)	15.00
Bond Allies Set (18)	75.00
Bond Villians Set (20)	80.00
Bond Girls Forever (15)	90.00
Bond Art, Images (20)	200.00
Roger Moore Costume (Case)	60.00
Halle Berry Cost. (multi-case)	150.00
Ursula Andress Autograph	175.00
Maud Adams Autograph	100.00
Alan Cummings Autograph	100.00
Lynn-Holly Johnson Auto	100.00
Kristina Wayborn Autograph	100.00
Lana Wood Autograph	50.00
Britt Ekland Autograph	50.00
Lana Wood Autograph	50.00
Tanya Roberts Autograph	30.00
Other Autographs	25.00

Lord of the Rings Evolution
Topps 2006

Set (72)	15.00
Stained Glass Set (10)	20.00
Evolution A Set (20)	30.00
Evolution B Set (20)	50.00

Lord of the Rings Masterpieces
Topps 2006

Set (90)	16.00
Etched-Foil Puzzle (6)	14.00
Silver Foil Art (9)	20.00
Bronze Foil Art Parallels	45.00
John McCrea Sketch	175.00
John Watkins-Chow Sketch	300.00
Kevin Graham Sketch	150.00
Steven Miller Sketch	150.00
Otis Frampton Sketch	90.00
Juan Carlos Ramos Sketch	90.00
Joanne Ellen Mutch Sketch	80.00
Otto Dieffenbach Sketch	80.00
Jon Ocampo Sketch	75.00
Jim Kyle Sketch	60.00
Connie Persampieir Sketch	60.00
Paul Gutierrez Sketch	50.00
William O'Neill Sketch	50.00
Amy Pronovost Sketch	40.00
Jake Myler Sketch	40.00
Keith Phillips Sketch	40.00
Thomas Hodges Sketch	40.00
Thomas Denmark Sketch	40.00
Other sketch cards	25.00

Star Trek: The Original Series 40th Anniversary
Rittenhouse Archives 2006

Set (110)	12.00
The Quotable Expansion (18)	35.00
Capt. Pike set (9)	30.00
Faces of Vina set (6)	30.00
Portraits (18)	190.00
1967 Expan "The Cage" (18)	180.00
Case Topper	50.00
Rhodes Reason autograph	45.00
Other autographs	20.00

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It never gets old

Experience the thrill

by **CHUCK ROZANSKI**

The thrill of unearthing yet another cool collection of older comics simply does not ever go away among those of us who have chosen this path in life.

I'm sitting in a lonely hotel room in the gray and gloomy Midwest this morning, waiting for the beginning of an antiques auction containing a few Golden Age comics later in the day.

As with most auctions, I have no idea if this one will pan out. Simply put, it all depends on who shows up to bid against me. I lucked out a couple of months ago and managed to score 1,200 low-grade 1940s and early 1950s Dell comics at an auction in Colorado for pennies on the dollar. But that was only because no one else with comics knowledge had attended that particular auction.

I think my odds of success this afternoon are quite a bit lower, as this area has a great many knowledgeable comics dealers. Still, even after 37 years of buying and selling comics, having an even a remote possibility of scoring yet another great comics deal is plenty enough reason to lure me temporarily away from the sunshine and beauty of my Colorado home.

Upon reflection, I suppose that there is a lesson to be learned from this behavior that I'm manifesting. You see, the auction today only contains a couple hundred comics, most of which I already have in stock. Once you've been bitten by the comics-dealing bug, however, it becomes compulsive to chase after even more books. The thrill of unearthing yet another cool collection of older comics simply does not ever go away among those of us who have chosen this path in life. It is a passion that burns brightly, even after many decades of success have provided the means to retire comfortably.

My thoughts have wandered into the realm of contemplating true passion for comics this morning, as a result of an interview that I provided yesterday to an author who is writing a book about the first 15 years of Image comics and the impact that the creation of Image has had on the comics world. Based on our discussion, I think that his book is going to be interesting. What I discovered during the course of our discussion, however, was just how much buried antipathy I still harbor for the many venal, conniving people who ran the comics world during the late 1980s and early 1990s.

To explain my sublimated anger a bit, we first have to step back to that momentous period of 1987-1988. Ron Perelman had just purchased Marvel and fired Jim Shooter as editor in chief, DC was riding high on the successes of *Batman: The Dark Knight* and *Watchmen*, and First, Eclipse, and Dark Horse were setting the stage for the successes of many smaller companies over the next five years. While that is an extremely simplified perspective on the world of comics in that period, the basic facts are that the huge successes achieved by the direct-market comics shops in replacing the sales of newsstands during the 1980s created a new retailing environment.

With double-digit growth in sales occurring practically every year, as more and more comics retail stores opened across the country (and around the world), it seemed as though the future of comics retailing was limitless. Particularly when you take into account that the new super-stars of comics — including Frank Miller, Todd McFarlane, and Alan Moore — were just the leading edge of a new generation of amazingly talented young comics artists and writers.

So what went wrong?

In my own opinion, it was the "suits." The lousy !@#$% suits. I found myself flushed with rage yesterday, as I discussed my recollections of all the connivers in fancy tailor-made suits who began appearing at comics-retailing seminars during the mid-1980s, all determined to rip a bit of our flesh for themselves. Strutting about with their pretentious locking leather briefcases, they had no concern about the future of the world of comics. They *did* smell the health and vitality of our business, however and, like all parasites, they strove to insert themselves into our system. Sadly, they succeeded beyond their wildest dreams, first inflating the comics business to ridiculous heights by the early 1990s and then bringing everything crashing down during the dreadful period of 1993-1996.

The origins of the suits were mixed, some (such as Ron Perelman and his lackeys) coming from the world of international finance, while others were trading-card speculators who jumped from that sinking ship into the comics

world during the late 1980s. There were also those who fancied themselves as astute private speculators. They could be found wandering the dealers' rooms of conventions, seeking to purchase rare items at advantageous prices. Of all the newcomers to the comics world, they ultimately made out the best, since many of them did eventually become hopelessly addicted to the comics themselves, rather than to just the monetary value that they represented. Oddly enough, by letting their passions win out over the avarice that had initially motivated them to buy comics and original comics art, they ultimately succeeded at achieving their original financial goals. Ironic, but true.

In the end, however, it was the turncoats (if you'll pardon the pun) within our own community who became the most damaging of the "suits." It's a bit hard for me to describe the comics world of the late 1970s accurately, since it was small, but suffice it to say that those of us who began the direct market were a motley aggregation of nonconformists. Even Phil Seuling, who was arguably the most influential direct-market personality of the 1970s, was never to be seen wearing a tie at a comics function. I can remember that Bill Schanes (now the VP of Purchasing at Diamond) took enormous pride in those casual days from wearing only sandals, without socks, to business meetings. In those more innocent days he referred to socks as "California Formalwear."

Some time during the mid-1980s, however, pretension began creeping into the wardrobes of retailers, distributors, and publishers. It became important to give the appearance of success, regardless of the reality. Some of this change was driven by a need to impress bankers and other financial backers, but a great deal also had to do with simply trying to give the perception of greater personal strength.

I'm not going to knock people's evolving personal wardrobe choices, as I found myself personally wearing much more in the way of Western snap-button shirts (originally designed to help you quickly disentangle from dangerous situations on a farm or ranch) and bolo ties after I purchased my farm in Colorado in 1990. What I *will* criticize, however, is the abandonment of passion that sometimes accompanied changes in personal attire.

Sadly, somewhere along the line during the late 1980s, a whole slew of comics folks became greedy. Advancing the cause of comics became a secondary objective to them, while personal financial advancement became their foremost goal. While this change in philosophy may seem logical on many levels, it actually produced the opposite effect. As these folks abandoned the cause of increasing the size of the comics market slowly and steadily through the creation of better products and, instead, supported the lucrative short-term agendas put forth by the outside suits, they began inadvertently strangling the goose that was laying the golden eggs.

That's exactly how we got into the ridiculous situation of the early 1990s, when Marvel was publishing 135 different comics a month (at double the cover price of just four years earlier), DC was "killing" Superman, and nearly every publisher large and small was engaging in the debilitating marketing of specious cover enhancements, multiple covers, and "limited" collector editions. Is it any wonder that the whole comics market eventually collapsed under the weight of this endless greed?

Having lived through both the age of innocence and the era of rampant greed, I try hard to forget paradise lost. I become endlessly bitter and angry, just recalling how much potential we squandered during that awful period of 1988-1993. Had we, instead, grown the comics business at 10-15% a year, nurturing and supporting the careers of emerging new creators, I think that the comics world today would be entirely different. Ultimately, however, market forces beyond anyone's control took over, and everything went to hell in a handbasket.

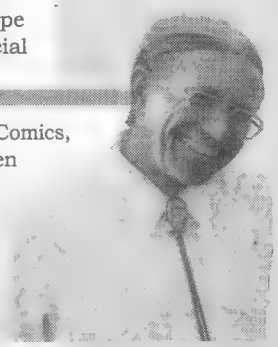
Only now, after a decade of almost no growth in nationwide comics sales, are we starting to see the market revive. What makes me most optimistic about our current future, however, is not just that we're seeing growth today but also that the growth we're experiencing is based on genuinely good comics being sold to individual readers, most of whom are filled with a passion for comics. As I see it, that bodes well for our collective futures over the next decade.

What makes me most optimistic about our current future, however, is not just that we're seeing growth today but also that the growth we're experiencing is based on genuinely good comics being sold to individual readers.

Returning to the subject of the Image book, I want to emphasize that I only marginally blame the Image creators for the excesses of the early 1990s. While they did engage in any number of practices that harmed the comics market of that period, they entered the picture late enough in the game that the die had already been cast. They added fuel to the speculative fire, but only because the suits from without and within had already created the scenarios of greed that made the Image marketing efforts a tremendous success.

The fact remains, however, that, as I spoke with the writer yesterday afternoon about the birth of Image, it dredged from my memory the hopeless anger that I felt at that time at having our collective dream for the future of comics co-opted by the greedheads in their fancy suits.

Upon careful reflection, even after 15 years have passed since those awful days, I still hope that they each burn forever in their own special hell. But that's just my passion speaking ...



CHUCK ROZANSKI, owner of Mile High Comics, the world's largest online retail store, has been with CBG since the beginning, his first ad appearing in #8 in 1971. Be sure to write him at *chuck@milehighcomics.com*, and check out his website at ***www.milehighcomics.com!***

CONVENTION PREVIEWS

Florida's FX gears up for 18th annual

by RAY SIDMAN

The comic-book and entertainment stars are lining up for the 18th annual FX Show, otherwise known as the Florida Extravaganza, when it comes to the Orange County Convention Center Jan. 26-28. Show organizer and managing partner Michael Herz spoke to ***CBG*** about plans for the event, which is in a new venue and for good reason, he said.

Since taking over the show with the 2005 event, Herz has led the show to much higher attendance. In 2005, the show hosted 108 booths and brought in 3,500 visitors. In 2006, that number climbed to 328 booths and 16,800 attendees. This year, Herz has lined up 450 booths and expects at least 20,000 visitors, and he said the goal is 25,000.

To accommodate the increased size, the show moved to a new part of the Orange County Convention Center, a section that's a couple years old, said Herz. The location offers "more parking and is more friendly to the fans trying to get into the show."

The show has lined up several big names, including such comic-book veterans as:

- Chuck Dixon
- Steve Niles
- Dan Brereton
- Michael Golden
- Gene Ha
- Dave Johnson
- Phil Noto
- Whilce Portacio
- Billy Tan
- Mark Texeira
- Tim Townsend
- Billy Tucci
- Ethan Van Sciver
- Daniel Way

and many more.

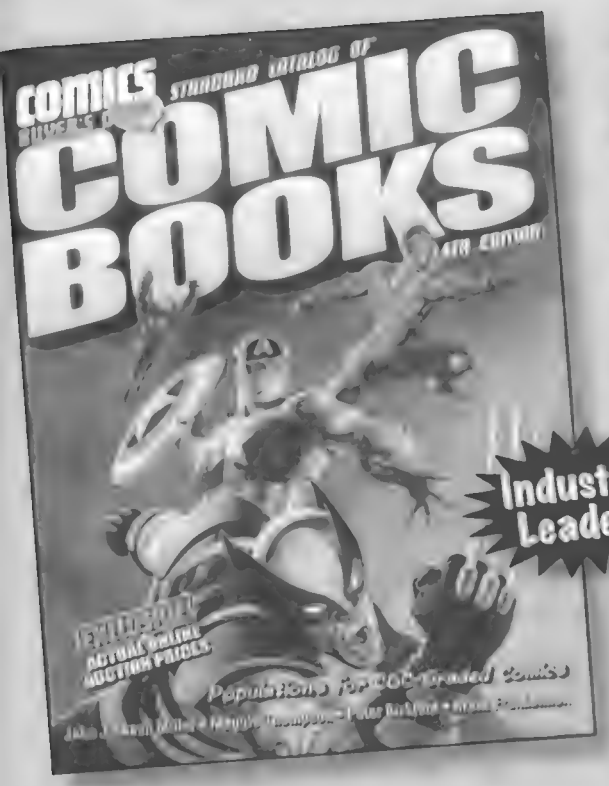
From the television/film side of things, celebrities include Hayden Panettiere from the new hit NBC series *Heroes*, Ron Glass of *Firefly* and *Serenity* fame, and many others, such as:

- from *Terminator* and *Aliens*, co-stars Michael Biehn and Lance Henriksen
- the cast of the upcoming film *Fanboys*: Kristen Bell (TV's Veronica Mars), Sam Huntington (Jimmy Olsen in *Superman Returns*), Dan Fogler, Jay Baruchel, Chris Marquette, and William Katt
- from ABC's *Lost*, Sam Anderson and Maggie Grace
- from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, Bianca Lawson
- Peter Graves.

Beyond the various programs, panels, and other events throughout the three days, an additional piece of fun will be what Herz tentatively called ""FX Sci-Fi Mystery Theater," where visitors can watch outtakes from movies with celebrities sitting on a riser in front of the movie screen commenting on their own outtakes. "Hopefully, that's going to take off and we'll do that every year." He said this year FX might do an Aliens theme with Biehn and Henriksen at the show. He also said it'd be fun to do it with the cast of *Fanboys*. "We're going to do a huge promotion with them."

When asked how he would describe the show to people, in one sentence, Herz replied, "It's the coolest show on Earth."

WHAT, WHERE, and WHEN
What: The Florida Extravaganza 2007
Where: Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, Fla.
When: Jan. 26-28
Hours: Noon to 7 p.m. Friday
10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday
10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday
Admission: Three-day pass: $40; weekend pass: $32; Friday or Saturday pass: $20; Sunday pass: $14; VIP Full Access pass (advance purchase only): $495
For more information: (877) 470-2826, fax: (321) 251-6248; *info@fxshow.com*; *www.fxshow.com*



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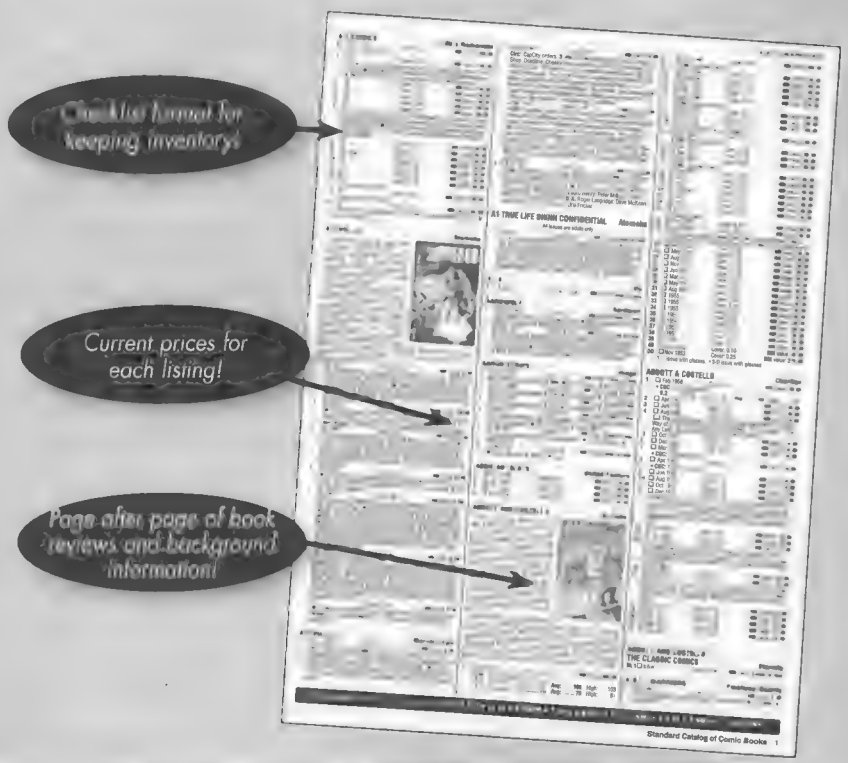

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The e-mail is *showscalendar@krause.com.*

CALIFORNIA

Dec 16 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 20 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 23 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 27 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Dec 30 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Jan 3 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Jan 6 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Jan 10 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Jan 13 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Jan 17 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Jan 20 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Jan 24 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Jan 27 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Jan 31 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Feb 3 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Feb 7 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Feb 10 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Feb 14 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Feb 17 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Feb 21 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Feb 24 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Feb 28 CA, City of Industry. Wed. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

Mar 2-4 CA, San Francisco. Wondercon. Moscone Center South, 747 Howard St. Comic-Con International, P.O. Box 128458, San Diego, CA 92112-8458. PH: 619-491-2475.

Mar 3 CA, City of Industry. Sat. Comic Book & Collectible Show. 19649 San Jose Ave, SH: 10am-5pm, T: 250, A: free. Frank Zamarripa, 19649 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748. PH: 909-444-7955.

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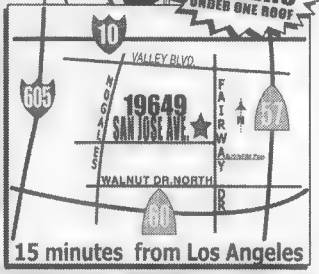

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ILLINOIS

Dec 17 IL, Bridgeview. Comic Books, NASCAR, Toys, Sports Cards, Hot Wheels & More Show, Oremus Center. 1 blk. W. of Harlem Ave. at 79th St., SH: 9am-1pm, T: 65-8', F: $35. for 1, $60. for 2, A: $2. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

Dec 30 IL, Orland Park. Comic Books, Sports Card & More Show, Civic Center. 147th St., 1 blk. W. La Grange Rd., SH: 9am-2pm, T: 60-6' & 8', F: $35.-$40., A: $1. John Leary, 9522 W. Shore Dr., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. PH: 708-423-1758.

Jan 14 IL, Peoria. Comicon, Signature Inn. 4112 N. Brandywine Dr., SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599.

Jan 21 IL, Gurnee. Comic Book Convention, Holiday Inn. 6161 W. Grand Ave., SH: 10am-3pm. Jim Libasci, PH: 847-336-9963.

Feb 3-4 IL, St. Charles. Chicgolandz Comic Con, DuPage Expo Center. SH: Sat. 11am-5pm, Sun. 10am-4pm, A: $6. per day. Zurko's Midwest Promos. Inc., 211 W. Green Bay St., Shawano, WI 54166. PH: 715-526-9769.

INDIANA

Jan 20 IN, South Bend. Comic Book Show, Comfort Stes. 52933 US 933, SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599.

IOWA

Dec 15-23 IA, Council Bluffs. Comic Book Show, Mall of the Bluffs. SH: mall hours, T: 55, A: free. Tim Belk, 2811 Joplin St., Joplin, MO 64804. PH: 417-781-4422

Dec 16 IA, Bettendorf. Comic Book Show, Ramada Inn. 3020 Utica Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599.

MASSACHUSETTS

Dec 16 MA, Tewksbury. Supershow, Elks Hall. 777 South St., SH: 9am-2pm, F: $35. for 1, $60. for 2. Bob Larocque, 138 Kimball Hill Rd., Hudson, NH 03051. PH: 603-880-7528.

Feb 11 MA, Chelmsford. Comic Book Show, Radisson Hotel. Exit 34 off 495, SH: 10am-3pm, T: 65, A: $5. Larry's Wonderful World, PH: 978-459-5323.

MISSOURI

Dec 30 MO, Chesterfield. Comic Book Convention, Hampton Inn & Stes. 5 McBride & Son Ctr. Dr., SH: 10am-4pm, A: free. Alan, PH: 309-657-1599.

NEW YORK

Feb 23-25 NY, New York City. Comic-Con, Jacob Javits Ctr. A: $30.-$40. per day, $45.-$65. for weekend. Reed Exhibitions, PH: 888-605-6059.

OHIO

Jan 7 OH, Cleveland. Comic & Sci-Fi Con, Knight's Party Center. KOFC Hall, 29101 Euclid Ave. (.5 mi. E. of I-90 & Exit 186), SH: 10am-3pm, T: 35-8', F: $60., A: $2., 6 & under free. Jeff Harper, 5220 Loma Linda NE, Canton, OH 44714. PH: 330-499-6056.

Feb 4 OH, Mansfield. Toy Show, Richland Co. Fairgrounds. SH: 10am-4pm, T: 140-8', A: $2.50. Kevin Spore, PO Box 3603, Mansfield, OH 44907. PH: 419-756-3904.

Feb 11 OH, Akron-Canton. Comic Con, Tadmor Hall. 3000 Krebs Dr., I-77 exit 120 (Arlington Rd.) off Jarvis Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 60-6', F: $80., A: $3., 6 & under free. Jeff Harper, 5220 Loma Linda NE, Canton, OH 44714. PH: 330-499-6056.

Mar 4 OH, Columbus. Comic Con, Buckeye Hall of Fame Cafe. 1421 Olentangy River Rd., SH: 10am-4pm, T: 40-6', F: $70., A: $3., 6 & under free. Jeff Harper, 5220 Loma Linda NE, Canton, OH 44714. PH: 330-499-6056.

TEXAS

Dec 17 TX, Dallas. JMV Comic Book Show, Omni Hotel-Park West. 1590 LBJ Freeway (IH-635 at IH-35), SH: 10am-4pm, T: 25-6', F: $50., A: $2. JMV Entertainment, PO Box 151, Temple, TX 76503. PH: 254-760-8682.

Jan 13 TX, Live Oak-San Antonio. Eckman's Comic, Sports Card & Toy Show, Civic Center. Pat Booker Rd., IH-35 & Loop 1604, SH: 9am-5pm, T: 155, A: $3., 12 & under free. Dale Eckman, 8050 Pioneer Oak, Converse, TX 78109. PH: 210-945-0003.

Jan 21 TX, San Antonio. JMV Comic Book Show, Crowne Plaza Hotel. 1111 NE Loop 410 (exit Nacogdoches Rd.), SH: 10am-4pm, T: 25-6', F: $50., A: $2. JMV Entertainment, PO Box 151, Temple, TX 76503. PH: 254-760-8682.

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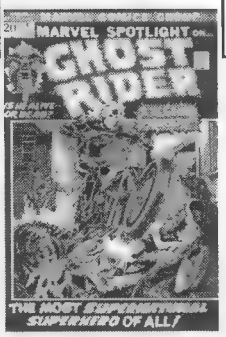

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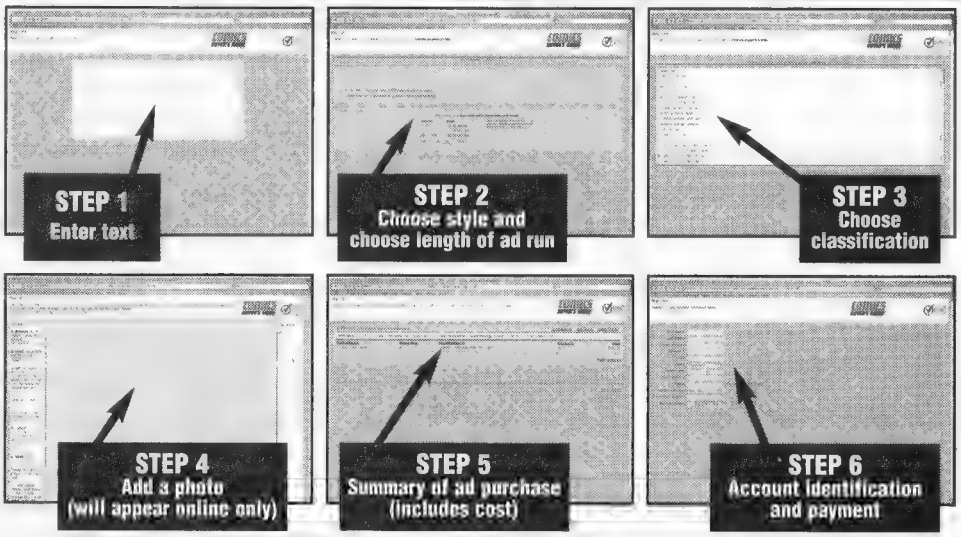

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4161 EC, Wanted
4170 Fawcett, For Sale
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4180 Foreign, For Sale
4181 Foreign, Wanted
4185 Graded Comics, For Sale
4186 Graded Comics, Wanted
4190 Harvey, For Sale
4191 Harvey, Wanted
4200 Humor/Funny Animals, For Sale
4201 Humor/Funny Animals, Wanted
4204 Image, For Sale/Wanted
4207 Malibu, For Sale/Wanted
4210 Marvel/Timely, For Sale
4211 Marvel/Timely, Wanted
4215 Platinum Age, For Sale
4216 Platinum Age, Wanted
4220 Science Fiction/Horror, For Sale
4221 Science Fiction/Horror, Wanted
4240 Underground, For Sale
4241 Underground, Wanted
4250 Independents, For Sale
4251 Independents, Wanted
4255 Valiant/Voyager, For Sale/Wanted
4260 Westerns, For Sale
4261 Westerns, Wanted
4300 Golden Age, For Sale
4301 Golden Age, Wanted
4310 Silver Age, For Sale
4311 Silver Age, Wanted
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4321 General Comics, Wanted

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4400 Original Art, For Sale
4401 Original Art, Wanted
4405 Sketch Books
4410 Big Little Books, For Sale
4411 Big Little Books, Wanted
4420 Books - General, For Sale
4421 Books - General, Wanted
4422 Collectible Card Games, For Sale
4423 Collectible Card Games, Wanted
4424 Computer Software/Supplies, For Sale
4425 Computer Software/Supplies, Wanted
4430 Paperbacks, For Sale
4431 Paperbacks, Wanted
4440 Pulps, For Sale
4441 Pulps, Wanted
4450 Magazines, For Sale
4451 Magazines, Wanted
4452 Science Fiction, For Sale
4453 Science Fiction, Wanted
4600 Reprints, For Sale
4601 Reprints, Wanted
4605 Phone Cards, For Sale
4606 Phone Cards, Wanted
4610 Portfolios/Posters, For Sale
4611 Portfolios/Posters, Wanted
4630 Trading Cards, For Sale
4631 Trading Cards, Wanted
4650 Oldtime Radio, For Sale
4651 Oldtime Radio, Wanted
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We think he still holds that post
In the letters page of *Superman* #144 (Apr. 61), there's a letter from a reader on the recent story "Superman Meets Al Capone." The reader comments on Superman going back in time to get information about a new kind of dinosaur, saying he wishes they hadn't used the name Gigantosaurus, since there was already a dinosaur by that name. He provides several other facts before the editor replies, "We hereby appoint you honorary prehistoric editor of all Superman magazines." The reader who wrote that letter was Don Glut, who went on to write comics for many companies — and an encyclopedia on dinosaurs. ***- Mike Curtis***

WANTED: MUSIC vendor magazines from 1958 to 1964 and record world magazine from 1964 to 1966. Also TV Junior magazines from 1950s. Louis Antonicello, 58 Giles Ave., Jersey City, NJ 07306.

WANTED: "MUSIC Vendor" trade magazine from 1958 to 1964 and "Record World" magazine from 1964 to 1966. Also Dick Clark Iffic pinback button. Louis Antonicello, 58 Giles Ave., Jersey City, NJ 07306.

WANTED-SATURDAY Evening Post magazines 1900-1950. Send list to Ron Kachel, 2434 Legacy Island Circle, Henderson, NV 89074 or fax 702-566-7474.

LOOKING FOR CBG #1194 and #1197. Contact George. E-mail: vandaly6@aol.com

LOOKING FOR Comics Journal #152. Contact George. E-mail: vandaly6@aol.com

SEARCHING FOR Diamond Dialogues and Diamond Dateline from 1992 to 1996. Contact George. E-mail: vandaly6@aol.com

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BERNIE WRIGHTSON, Lea Dowling, Mike Kaluta portfolios for sale, $10 each. E-mail: larrymoretti@yahoo.com or write: Larry Moretti, 342 Moretti Rd, Indiana, PA 15701.

ART SUYDAM, Jeff Jones, Esteban Maroto portfolios for sale, $10 each. E-mail: larrymoretti@yahoo.com or write: Larry Moretti, 342 Moretti Rd, Indiana, PA 15701.

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RADIO CEREAL giveaways for sale. Western, comic character, etc. Web site: geocities.com/spark929 Check Web for lists. E-mail: spark929@yahoo.com Joe Fair, 119 Crestwood Dr, New Castle, PA 16101.

CDS: SUPERMAN Broadway Soundtrack album, 23 tracks. "Best Of James Bond", 19 tracks. $10 each ppd, or best offer. Lee Solomon, 2839 Marlbank, Sterling Heights, MI 48310.

GO-GO COMIC #2, photos Beatles, etc. VF-NM $75. Tippy's Friends #6, Dave Clark Five photos, Mint, $90. S. Berdy, PO Box 506, Newark, NY 14513. 315-331-6618.

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4661 MISCELLANEOUS, WANTED

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LOOKING FOR Animated X-Men episode "Longshot" and 80s Spidey Magneto Talks and Dr. Prescribes Doom in VHS/DVD. Mike 773-743-7622, zookeeper615@hotmail.com

4700 NOVELTIES, TOYS, GAMES FOR SALE

BOWEN STATUES: The big ones. First license. Less were made 1,500-2,000. Now that Bowen is established, 5,000 are made. All statues MIP, never displayed. Opened to check for damage, as Bowens policy. I don't have many. Mr. Fantastic $350; Iron Man Gold/Gray $350; Dare Devil Red $350; Capt. America Mod $450; Spiderman: Ditko, on rooftop $500, Classic pose $350. One From D.C. Sgt. Rock, comes with Kubert print, D.C. Archives, Vol.I, $400. Items over-sized shipment $15, more outside USA. No credit cards or Western Union. Postal money order, personal or bank checks. John Pisanka, 79 Ave. A #6, New York, NY 10009. 212-388-1556.

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COMIC READER #164-#185, CBG #963-#1077, Superhero Merchandise catalogs 1975-1979. Best offer/ trade. Toth, 247 Lakeview Dr., Smithfield, ME 04978. vtoth@tds.net

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GIANT FREE catalog. bburnett@igc.org or 510-666-0732 Starland Strips, 1563 Solano PMB #155, Berkeley, CA 94707-2116.

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LOOKING FOR Animated X-Men episode "Longshot" and 80s Spidey Magneto Talks and Dr. Prescribes Doom in VHS/DVD. Mike 773-743-7622, zookeeper615@hotmail.com

Him work hard, kemo sabe

In watching old TV commercials for the *Lone Ranger* TV show and products, some fans are suprised how seldom Jay Silverheels appears with Clayton Moore. In actuality, he was doing twice as much Tonto work as Moore as The Ranger.

When *The Lone Ranger* radio show began in 1933, it went through a few Rangers, settling eventually on Earle Graser, who died in a car accident in 1941. He was replaced by former announcer Brace Beemer, no stranger to the mask, since he had played The Lone Ranger in virtually all public appearances and publicity photos since the show began. But he had a problem with Tonto.

John Todd was always Tonto on the radio show, but he was in his late 50s when the show began. When it ended in 1955, he was in his late 80s, and it was often said, "He was old enough to have been Tonto." He did photos and appearances in character in the 1930s but soon stopped doing so. When the TV show began in 1948, Jay Silverheels signed to do publicity appearances with both Clayton Moore and Brace Beemer, in addition to John Hart, who replaced Moore for one season (and is the only surviving Lone Ranger of that era). Silverheels had the part for the rest of his life, making his last appearance as Tonto with Moore for an Aqua Velva commercial in the 1970s. ***- Mike Curtis***

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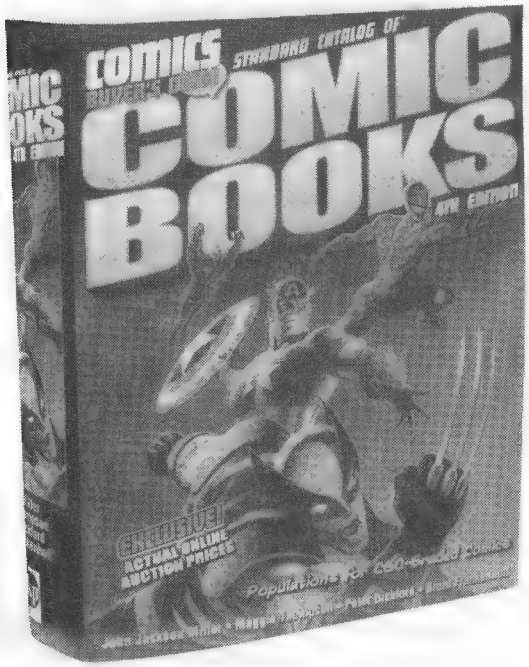

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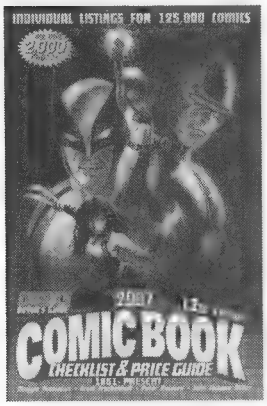

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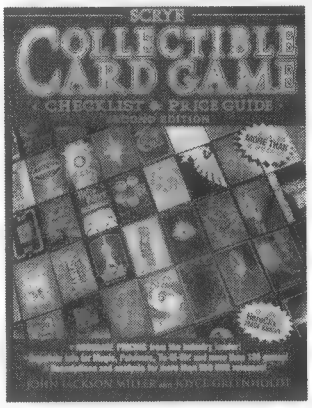

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Spider-Man: Threat or Menace?

Maybe JJJ was right . . .

by **MAGGIE THOMPSON**

The Spider-Man menace

My son Stephen's day began, straightforwardly enough, at about 6:30 a.m.: "Daddy! Spider-Man! [Poke.]"

Within a second, Spider-Man — aided by heroic 2½-year-old sidekick Grace Thompson — had dug his tiny, rigid finger under my son's eyelid.

Have trouble waking up in the morning? Try having Spider-Man jabbing you in the eye; Stephen assured me it does the trick efficiently enough.

I suppose it's just as well that the vintage 2005 action figure wasn't truly a Web-Slinger; if there's one thing worse than a poke in the eye with a sharp finger, it's a poke in the eye with a sharp finger, followed by a gush of webbing. Do you suppose Peter Parker ever accidentally glued his eyelids together while, say, waking up in the morning? (I guess we're talking about the movie Parker — and the revamp of the Ultimate line. Ditko-and-Lee's Parker would have had to be lucid enough to don the web-shooters.)

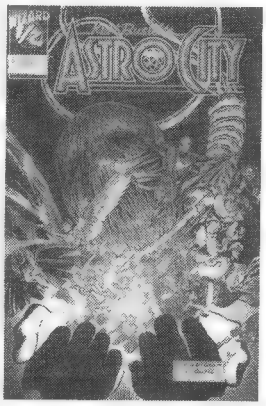
In any case, I don't suppose Toy Biz was at fault for the eye-poking incident. In an age in which plug-in appliances carry tags warning against use while in the bathtub, it'd still be a bit much to label a Spider-Man action figure, "Do not stick Spider-Man's fingers in Daddy's eye."

Current events

It's been quite a month.

It kicked off with my return from the Friends of Old Time Radio convention in Newark and the follow-up week with my daughter's family and my brother in the project that brought his 17-year accumulation of Stuff (he's not 17; the accumulation is of that antiquity) next door to Valerie, Zander, and grandson Devon.

Once I was back in Iola, everyone wrapped up ***CBG*** #1625 and sent it to the printer, whereupon Brent and I began training to make the super-switch: from PCs to Macs.



We've been looking forward to this switch-over for some time.

For one thing, it should mean that we can quit ending up with pages like Page 177 in #1624, in which one of the stories Kurt Busiek judged as his best ended up being the one in *Astro City* #fi, instead of what I had originally typed: *Astro City* #½. (That's the sort of thing that can happen "between platforms.")

I'm Maggie Thompson and I approve this message.

I grab interesting cheap mass-market

Father and daughter achieved a reconciliation, but Spider-Man is still in trouble.

used books to read on planes, in waiting rooms, and the like. On my September trip to Baltimore, the book of choice was *Galaxy: Volume 1* edited (in 1980) by Frederik Pohl, Martin H. Greenberg, and Joseph D. Olander. It's a collection of wonderful short stories (as is *Volume 2*) and benefits from having introductory background essays by the editors and, in most cases, by the story writers, as well.

Pohl's 1979 introduction included the following — and it struck me (with the substitution of the word "articles" for "stories") as pertinent to ***Comics Buyer's Guide***:

A magazine is not just a grab bag of stories. A magazine is a living thing that grows and changes and has a personality of its own. If it is to be successful, its personality must be so engaging that it becomes your friend.

You welcome your true friends into your home because you expect their company to be rewarding to you — as it's been in the past. You don't demand a guarantee that they will amuse and delight you on every specific occasion. Instead, you are interested in them, not just in the performance they give at any particular moment, and you invite them back primarily just because you want to know what they've been up to.

A magazine is a more commercial proposition than a neighbor, to be sure. A certain amount of calculated cunning goes into building that kind of friendship called "reader loyalty." But that doesn't make the relationship any less real or powerful. The stories are most certainly the major element in the mix, but reader loyalty is concocted from a dozen other ingredients as well. Columns. Features. A certain style of blurb writing. A certain style of artwork. These are the hidden persuaders, the recognition signals that add up to the personality of the magazine.

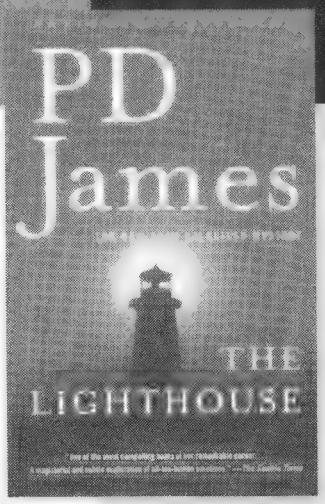
Absolutely. It's no less true of comics companies — and the fidelity they create in their readers — and of what we provide in ***CBG*** and *CBGXtra.com*. We hope you continue to enjoy both your favorite comics and the forum we offer.

Spoiling

We're in an ongoing state of contention around here concerning Spoiler Warnings, because we reach out to new readers as well as to our longtime friends.

How much should we let go without a caution for those who may just now be picking up DC Showcases and Marvel Essentials to read adventures for the first time? For example, in the course of editing George Nelson's article on *Nightwing* in this issue, I debated how much of a spoiler warning to put on a major development in *Infinite Crisis*.

This came to mind again as I read P.D. James' Adam Dalgliesh mystery *The Lighthouse*. I try to avoid reading cover copy, if I've already decided to read something, because my decision is, yes, *made*. I don't need to know more about it. Nevertheless, in a quick glance at the back cover, once I was more than halfway into the book, I discovered it casually tossed off information that the *author* hadn't revealed until Page 293 of a 383-page of the novel.



Why would any promotions department think it a good idea to reveal something that occurs three-quarters of the way into a *mystery*?

Nothing new

Beau's column this month pays tribute to days of yore, when kids could play with martial toys. I thought ***CBG***'s readers might find it of interest to realize that we're not in the only era to condemn such treats.

Saki (Hector Hugh Munro, 1870-1916) was killed in action in World War I, but by then he'd amassed a high page-count of delicious stories. In his "The Toys of Peace," written before that conflict though not collected for printing until 1923, you'll find the following passages:

Saki

" ... you are coming down to us at Easter, and you always bring the boys some toys, so that will be an excellent opportunity for you to inaugurate the new experiment. Go about in the shops and buy any little toys and models that have special bearing on civilian life in its more peaceful aspects. Of course you must explain the toys to the children and interest them in the new idea. I regret to say that the 'Siege of Adrianople' toy, that their Aunt Susan sent them, didn't need any explanation; they knew all the uniforms and flags, and even the names of the respective commanders, and when I heard them one day using what seemed to be the most objectionable language they said it was Bulgarian words of command; of course it *may* have been, but at any rate I took the toy away from them. Now I shall expect your Easter gifts to give quite a new impulse and direction to the children's minds; Eric is not eleven yet, and Bertie is only nine-and-a-half, so they are really at a most impressionable age."

We're not in the only era to condemn such treats.

The children are given the toys:

"It's a municipal dust-bin," said Harvey hurriedly; "you see all the refuse and litter of a town is collected there, instead of lying about and injuring the health of the citizens."

Too violent? Should we be limited to the Comics of Peace?

In an awful silence he disinterred a little lead figure of a man in black clothes.

"That," he said, "is a distinguished civilian, John Stuart Mill. He was an authority on political economy."

"Why?" asked Bertie.

"Well, he wanted to be; he thought it was a useful thing to be."

Bertie gave an expressive grunt, which conveyed his opinion that there was no accounting for tastes.

Another square building came out, this time with windows and chimneys.

"A model of the Manchester branch of the Young Women's Christian Association," said Harvey.

"Are there any lions?" asked Eric hopefully. He had been reading Roman history and thought that where you found Christians you might reasonably expect to find a few lions.

"There are no lions," said Harvey. "Here is another civilian, Robert Raikes, the founder of Sunday schools, and here is a model of a municipal wash-house. These little round things are loaves baked in a sanitary bake-house. That lead figure is a sanitary inspector, this one is a district councillor, and this one is an official of the Local Government Board."

"What does he do?" asked Eric wearily.

"He sees to things connected with his Department," said Harvey. "This box with a slit in it is a ballot-box. Votes are put into it at election times."

"What is put into it at other times?" asked Bertie.

"Nothing. And here are some tools of industry, a wheelbarrow and a hoe, and I think these are meant for hop-poles. This is a model beehive, and that is a ventilator, for ventilating sewers. This seems to be another municipal dust-bin — no, it is a model of a school of art and public library. This little lead figure is Mrs. Hemans, a poetess, and this is Rowland Hill, who introduced the system of penny postage. This is Sir John Herschel, the eminent astrologer."

"Are we to play with these civilian figures?" asked Eric.

...

It was time, he thought, to go back to the boys' room, and see how they were getting on with their peace toys. As he stood outside the door he could hear Eric's voice raised in command; Bertie chimed in now and again with a helpful suggestion.

"That is Louis the Fourteenth," Eric was saying, "that one in knee-breeches, that Uncle said invented Sunday schools. It isn't a bit like him, but it'll have to do."

"We'll give him a purple coat from my paint-box by and by," said Bertie.

"Yes, an' red heels. That is Madame de Maintenon, that one he called Mrs. Hemans. She begs Louis not to go on this expedition, but he turns a deaf ear. He takes Marshal Saxe with him, and we must pretend that they have thousands of men with them. The watchword is *Qui vive?* and the answer is *L'état c'est moi* — that was one of his favourite remarks, you know. They land at Manchester in the dead of the night, and a Jacobite conspirator gives them the keys of the fortress."

Peeping in through the doorway Harvey observed that the municipal dust-bin had been pierced with holes to accommodate the muzzles of imaginary cannon, and now represented the principal fortified position in Manchester; John Stuart Mill had been dipped in red ink, and apparently stood for Marshal Saxe.

"Louis orders his troops to surround the Young Women's Christian Association and seize the lot of them. 'Once back at the Louvre and the girls are mine,' he exclaims. We must use Mrs. Hemans again for one of the girls; she says 'Never,' and stabs Marshal Saxe to the heart."

"He bleeds dreadfully," exclaimed Bertie, splashing red ink liberally over the facade of the Association building.

"The soldiers rush in and avenge his death with the utmost savagery. A hundred girls are killed" — here Bertie emptied the remainder of the red ink over the devoted building — "and the surviving five hundred are dragged off to the French ships. 'I have lost a Marshal,' says Louis, 'but I do not go back empty-handed.'"

Harvey stole away from the room, and sought out his sister.

"Eleanor," he said, "the experiment — "

"Yes?"

"Has failed. We have begun too late."

The more things change, the more they remain the same, folks. I didn't originate the saying — or the Saki tale — but I try not to lose sight of either.

When someone today says the attempt to take toys of violence (or, say, comics or DVDs of action animation) away from kids is a new phenomenon ... well ... it's just the newest example of an *old* phenomenon.

(And do look for a copy of the complete short stories of Saki, while you're at it. His "The Open Window" [collected 1914] is one of the most-reprinted tales in English. In horror fiction, "Sredni Vashtar" [collected 1911] and "Gabriel-Ernest" [collected 1910] are outstanding. In out-and-out fantasy, "Tobermory" [collected 1911] is a thought-provoking gem. Oh, just read them all. None of his short-shorts should take you more than 10 minutes' time. "Filboid Studge: The Story of a Mouse That Helped" [also 1911] is another classic. Hey, thanks to copyright law, the lot of 'em is in public domain. Treat yourself; you can read them online, if you can't abide the thought of plunking down cash for a delightful interlude.)

Heroes

So are we all watching *Heroes* on TV? The premise, as intoned in the pilot's opening voice-over, is summed up:

In recent days, a seemingly random group of individuals has emerged with what can only be described as "special" abilities. Although unaware of it now, these individuals will not only save the world, but change it forever. This transformation from ordinary to extraordinary will not occur overnight.

Taking a look at the *www.televisionwithoutpity.com* website, it's possible to gauge fan reaction, as well as the reactions of the moderators who write extended, snarky critiques. I continue to find the site helpful, both in providing clear discussions of what's happened and in pointing out plot holes, some of which (I'm hoping) may be clues to upcoming action. For example: Why is it that geeky Hiro, behind the steering wheel of a car for the first time, apparently doesn't know such basics as what the foot pedals are for? So he's never so much as *ridden* in a car nor seen footage of someone driving a vehicle? This *technogeek* guy? But I didn't notice it when I saw the episode.

By the way, one of the most prevalent of audience responses is an outpouring of affection for Hiro, played by Masi Oka. Oka (and there's an interview with him in ***CBG*** #1624) has been pretty steadily employed in the last five years, especially in the continuing role of Franklyn in *Scrubs*. But this role seems to me to be transformative, even as it grabs a sizeable percentage of comics buffs as one of the most endearing possible representatives of our world.

Sample quotes from commentators:

Episode One commentary "I could wind up loving or hating this show, but I will always be a fan of Super-Hiro."

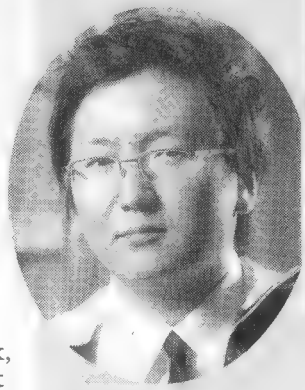
Episode Two commentary "Hiro speeds to the back of the [comic] book and sees not only a picture of the author, Isaac Mendez, but an address for him. I'm not a big comics fan, but I devour several different graphic novels on a regular basis and, after a thorough glance through my inventory, not a single one of the books in my collection has a personal address for the creator. That's just ... well, it's basically a plot device shoved into a comic, and that annoys me. Sorry, but it does."

Episode Six commentary "Hiro pouts some more; Ando wisely tells him, 'Every hero is on a journey to find his place in the world. But it's a journey. You don't start at the end. Otherwise, they can't make a movie about it later.' ... if only Brandon Routh's *Superman* had started at the end, I could get back the nine hours I spent watching that ..."

And there are pages and pages (and pages) of additional remarks from forum participants, providing insights, feedback, and just general opinions. I've found that some *TVwoP* commentaries have ended up in my own conversation, as when they referred to Niki Sanders' reflective twin as ikiN (before Niki herself applied a different name).

By the way, I'm mulling the Episode Four complaint. Since that comic book is published in the future of the ongoing storyline, it seems to me that it *could* be a plot element that that data *does* appear in the issue, precisely so that Hiro *can* find the artist. After all, comics people are very much involved in this series behind the scenes ...

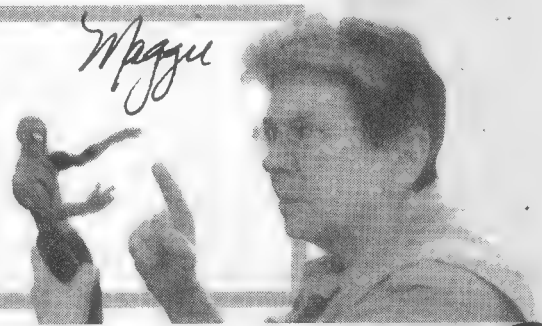
Oh, and I just learned, via *Entertainment Weekly*, that Christopher Eccleston has joined the series' cast. Woo *Who*!



"I could wind up loving or hating this show, but I will always be a fan of Super-Hiro."

— Television without Pity

MAGGIE THOMPSON warns Spider-Man that with pokey fingers comes the possibility of injuries, so he should seriously watch it. She trusts that you haven't been subjected to eye violence from Peter Parker's alter ego. If you have, try compresses and relaxation. If you have a sad tale of super-hero brutality to share, let us know via ***CBG*** Editorial Dept., 700 E. State St., Iola, WI 54945, or *ohso@krause.com*. And you can also visit us at ***www.cbgxtra.com***. Please do!



Write to us at Comics Buyer's Guide OH, SO?

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POSTING PAYS OFF

J. Wilson
*Via **CBGXtra.com***

I'm behind in my reading, so I just got to the *Oh, So?* section of #1623. Imagine my surprise when something I posted on ***CBGXtra.com*** made it into the magazine. Pretty cool beans, there.

Maggie: *Part of the evolution of our print existence has been reaching out to include for our readers some of the discussions that reach us via the Internet.*

Thanks for participating in the effort!

CENSORSHIP GOES SOUTH

Earl Green
*Via **CBGXtra.com***

Just found the following story on CBSNews.com.

I clicked on the "Strange News" button, and found that three girls had been booted from school, because the principal didn't like the *Captain Underpants* clothes they had worn for Super-Hero Day. Wow, man, what censorship.

Can someone point somebody from the Comic Book Legal Defense Fund that way? Something needs to be done, here.

By the way, personally, I have never even heard of *Captain Underpants*. I think we need to have a movie made about him. Gee, what a great idea for a crossover. Superman vs. Captain Underpants. Batman vs. Captain Underpants. Archie vs. Captain Underpants. Boggles *my* mind, anyway.

From the online home of Captain Underpants: "Warning: This website contains scenes and material which may be considered too silly for grown-ups, small animals, and many varieties of houseplants. If you are a grown-up, a small animal, or a houseplant, we strongly urge you to seek the permission of a kid before browsing this site!"

The site also contains "boring grown-up stuff," as well.

Looks just right for kids.

By the way, here's something that's always bugged me in the first *Superman* movie: Lois is interviewing Supes in a terrace apartment that she shouldn't be able to afford on a reporter's salary. But that's irrelevant. She sits down, and Supes sits across the table.

Long, dramatic pause. "Do you ... eat?" Supes: "Yes. Yes, I do. When I'm hungry." "Of course you do." Hee, hee, hee.

Now, every time I see that scene, I fill in a missing word of my own choice. I'll bet all the rest of you out there do, too. But what do you think Lois really meant to say? As Arsenio said, "Things that make you go, 'Hmm.' "

Ray: *The Captain Underpants series of children's books by Dav Pilkey is incredibly popular among children, especially those who are not houseplants. The official site is at **www.pilkey.com**. According to the site, the Captain Underpants universe contains 10 books.*

Maggie: *They were 17-year-old seniors (honor student and softball player Chelsea Horowitz and Ashley Imhof and Eliana Levin) at Long Beach High School who were told they couldn't wear their costumes on Oct. 25, designated Superhero Day as part of the school's Senior Week. The AP quoted Principal Nicholas Restivo as saying, "I didn't know which super-hero it was, not that it mattered."*

The way the students chose to dress to represent the character was wearing beige leotards and stockings under white briefs and red capes. Restivo said, "Yes, I know they weren't naked, but the appearance was that they were naked."

They weren't "booted from school"; the principal said they could have worn gym clothes, borrowed clothes, or had clothes sent from home, but the students went home instead.

SAN DIEGO DREAMING

Gregory R. Karalis
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As a longtime comics and art collector — I'm 55 — I hearken back to the early days of Alan Light's *Buyer's Guide for Comic Fandom* and before. As a 14-year-old, I used to haunt the old bookstores in Jersey City, N.J., begging the owner to search the much-guarded back room for "the older comics."

Now, as a middle-aged adult, I find myself facing my biggest challenge ever. Should I attend my first San Diego Comic-Con? Frankly, I am extremely confused. For months, I have been reading stories and articles about why San Diego has gotten too big for its own good and I would be better off spending the day at the San Diego Zoo or, perhaps, Pizza Hut.

I do not wish to sound sarcastic to the hobby I have a deep passion for. However, I continually read about how the con is too big, how there is little parking, how you may need to walk upwards of a mile to get there because of that lack of parking. Then, I read that thousands of fans were turned away on Saturday of this year's con, and one of the hobby's biggest dealers is crying sour grapes that we should break the convention up into two weeks at two different locations.

I can go on, but this should be sufficient for my point. It appears that, lately, I have been reading more negative publicity about the San Diego con than positive, and my confusion is mounting. Will someone please tell me why I should bring my one and only 5-year-old son to an event that is presenting itself as a disaster in the making.

Now, no one has to tell me as a comics and convention veteran that any con is what you make it and what you plan for. I am just trying to battle the negative being presented to

CBG Xtra ONLINE BONUS! Don't want to wait to share your opinion? Log in now at www.cbgxtra.com, visit the Oh, So forum, and post away!

Warm wishes and happy holidays!

me by the comics fraternity, including this very publication. Please, someone — any one — tell me something that I can hold onto for hope for 2007.

Ray: *Every event, be it a con or a trip to Pizza Hut, will have its pros and cons. Some can be prevented by planning ahead; others are unpreventable.* ***CBG*** *has received (and printed) stories from both happy and unhappy attendees of Comic-Con International: San Diego as well as other shows. Hopefully, you're not too discouraged, since attending the show certainly helps support the industry.*

Maggie: *The convention is unforgettable and enormous fun. You and your son will come away with wonderful memories, though no one can predict in advance what those memories will be.*

Here are tips:

Check out the website and CBG discussions in advance. *You'll enjoy it more, if you target a few activities to focus on — with other enjoyable moments (and there will be many) as a bonus.*

Bring a couple of small items to eat and drink. *A small bottled water and a nutrition bar or two will give you more flexibility in choosing when you want to sit down to have a more formal meal. It's a good idea to eat a good breakfast; I sometimes end up simply not eating lunch, so starting with enough energy to last the day can be a boon.*

Plan to come for the entire show. *The lines are slightly less on Wednesday, and that'll be the last time you have to wait in a registration line.*

By the way, did you notice that these tips are pretty standard for any vacation excursion? The show can be overwhelming but it doesn't have to be intimidating.

And it sounds weird, but you might enjoy springing $12 to order a DVD of Mark Hamill's ***Comic Book: The Movie****, as advertised at* ***www.comicbookthemovie.com****. It's basically Mark's love letter to the convention and was shot at the convention. It'll give you an idea of the size and events of the show (and parts of it should provide laughs). The gentleman who provides the voice for SpongeBob SquarePants plays a longtime fan, and you actually get to see him with his wife and son at the show — which provides a lighthearted look at a* ***family*** *in attendance.*

Brent: *Allow extra time to navigate the crowds when going to panels or making your way across the convention floor. In addition to the escalators, elevator, and staircases in the main entrance, there is an additional set at the rear of the hall that isn't as congested.*

Take a break to go outside for fresh air and quiet time away from the convention floor. It will refresh you and allow you to plan your next foray in a peaceful spot. The convention has a number of free shuttle buses available to transport attendees to area hotels and parking lots. Moreover, nearby hotels offer a variety of food at a variety of prices.

That said, the convention is a wonderful opportunity to see creators and collectibles you won't find anywhere else. The chance to see upcoming (and classic) comics (and their creators), not to mention the opportunity to get a sneak peek at blockbuster films (and

their stars) is unbeatable.

In addition to the shuttle buses, Comic-Con International has made vast strides in improving the attendance experience for everyone, including online registration that generates a bar code that can be quickly scanned at the registration desk to produce your name badge.

*I had not attended Comic-Con International: San Diego in several years (somebody had to stay behind to produce **CBG**, while the rest of the staff traveled) and was amazed at how much the show had grown in my absence. Once I got used to the overall increase in size, many of the old memories of previous shows were rekindled.*

So make memories of your own. You may also want to consider attending a smaller local show for your son's first exposure to a convention. There are several listed in our Convention Calendar on Page 168 — and online each week.

GETTING RESPECT

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With regard to **CBG** #1624 and the article "Making Comics and Reading Them" (Heidi MacDonald, page 66), I must agree Hollywood has an infatuation with comic books. Not only that, but many actors and actresses want to become a super-hero by playing a super-hero in a movie.

Look how proud Wesley Snipes was playing Blade for the first time, as he walked on the Jay Leno show. Look how desperately Nicolas Cage wanted to play Superman and finally told his agent, "OK, if I can't play Superman, what super-hero can I play?" Now Nicolas Cage will be Ghost Rider in an upcoming movie.

At one time, comic-book readers hid in the closets because people would laugh at us. I remember one person telling me that he read "real" books, not comic books. Nowadays, I can walk into Borders bookstore and sit next to people who are reading comic books and other people who are reading books. Reading comic books is nothing to be ashamed about, and people are recognizing comic books as great entertainment.

Hollywood has taken notice, and it's amazing how many comic books are becoming movies. It seems everyone wants to be a super-hero, and a good example of that was the Sci-Fi Channel's *Stan Lee's Who Wants to Be a Super-Hero?* The contestants of that show took the super-hero bit seriously, and contestants were crying when they were eliminated from the show.

My brother Andres used to tease me as a kid and as an adult for reading comics. Now, when I talk to him on the phone and he says something like, "Hey, Paul, did you see *Sin City*? That's a great movie," I say, "Andres, that movie was from a comic book." Andres has more respect for comics now, and it's a great time for comic-book fans everywhere.

By the way, in 1996, I created a comic book called *The Legendary Dark Silhouette*, and Howard Nash, a New York movie producer, is now in the process of making the movie. It will be called *The Silhouette*, and the first ad for the movie appears at my website, *www.jazmaonline.com*. There are links there to Nash's movies, one of which is called *Tracks* and stars Ice-T.

HEROES LOOPS?

Dan Tobias
*Via **CBGXtra.com***

Some more stuff about *Heroes*:

It seems like as if might be a "time loop" regarding the "save the cheerleader, save the world" line. Hiro appears from the future to tell it to Peter. Later, Peter repeats it to the present-day Hiro over the phone. Thus, at some time in the future, when Hiro goes back to give the message to Peter in the subway car, he actually got it originally from him in the first place, causing a loop of causality. Whether it's actually true that saving the cheerleader will save the world is unknown.

Turning now to the "real world," it's been reported that the manufacturer of the garbage disposal pictured in the premiere episode is suing NBC because the show allegedly portrays the disposals as being more dangerous to would-be super-heroines inserting their hands into them than they actually are.

***Maggie:** Yep, in **Emerson Electric Co. v. NBC Universal Television Studios Inc., 06-cv-01454**, Emerson Electric Co. sued in a seven-count complaint claiming trademark infringement and defamation of its InSinkErator product.*

NBC's Curt King said NBC didn't believe there was a legal issue as broadcast but that it would "edit the episode for future uses."

WANTED: FRESH THINKING

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Catching up on several recent editions of **CBG** that arrived from my supplier in the space of a fortnight — and, as earlier in the year, slightly out of sequence (Have you had a problem with UK imports this last year?) — I came across Matthew Hawes' letter (#1623, page 186) with his suggestions for changing the default U.S. comics format.

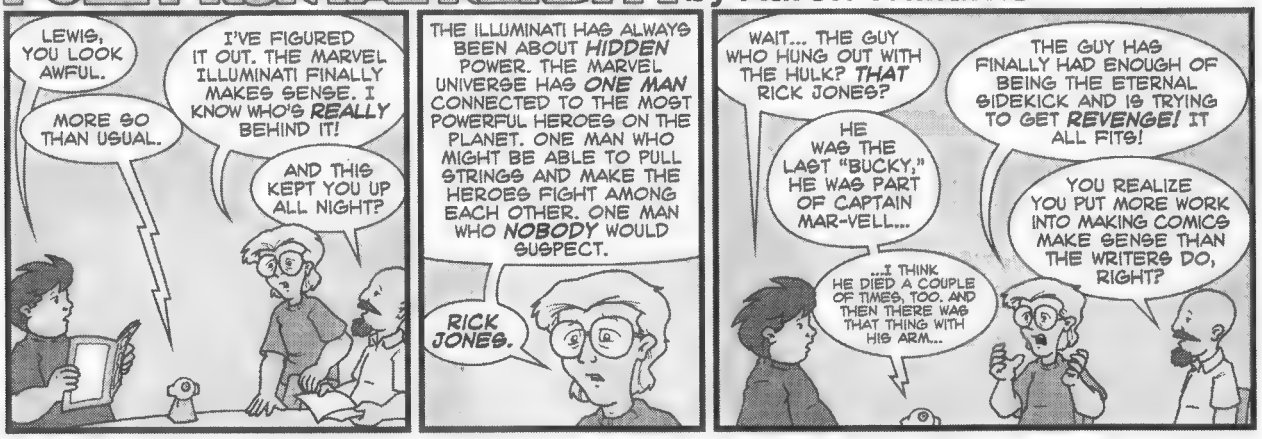
It's come at an interesting time for me.

Longtime readers may recall previous letters asking questions to help with the completion of a book about the history of all of Marvel's comics in Britain, with the main focus on their own UK outfit, supplemented by half a book full of indices as to what was reprinted and originated, as well as the comics themselves.

This is now completed, and I will soon be discussing how we're going to reformat the book for print (based on the first version I almost published before the Quality Communications contract was offered) in the next month or two. What interested me about Hawes' letter, though, is that what he suggests is identical to Marvel's own development in the UK since coming under the auspices of Panini Comics, which acquired the British division at the tail-end of Marvel's late '90s "difficulties."

A little history: Unlike the United States, Marvel had a strong network of newsagents to sell its new weekly comics in, when it set up shop over here in 1972. With comics long having a section of the shelves to themselves, it made Marvel's infiltration of our market far easier.

By the 1990s — although we now had a plethora of comics shops all over the country in comparison with 1972 — they still mainly sold U.S. imports bar *2000 AD*, some UK indies, and some Marvel UK titles, while the newsagents were still



selling British comics the same as before. The big change was that boys' comics weren't selling any more, and Marvel gradually shifted out of the weekly arena into fortnightly, and finally all monthly, formats.

By now, many other non-comics publishers were adopting the four-weekly frequency, as well. Marvel then had a second attempt at reintroducing a line of U.S.-sized comics with larger page counts. Its first attempt, launched in the '90's, was the U.S. format *The Complete Spider-Man*. It was uncommon for three reasons: It was completely in color for the first time, Marvel's first reprint book in this format, and Marvel's largest-ever regular comic: a 100-page whopper containing four complete reprints taken from the *Amazing*, *Spectacular*, *Web*, and plain *Spider-Man* titles.

After two years, it was canceled and replaced with the magazine-sized *Exploits of Spider-Man*, which then showcased a wider variety of Spider-Man material for the next four years.

Immediately after its cancellation, *Exploits* was again replaced by yet another Spider-Man title: *Astonishing Spider-Man*. This time, it was 76 pages with a thick laminated card cover — rather than the usual thinner glossy ones — and was again an all-color comic.

A companion title, *Essential X-Men*, was launched alongside it as part of a new cover-emblazoned range of Marvel Collector's Editions. Amazingly, some 140-plus issues later, the format stuck, and they're still going strong today. Other additions then appeared over the past decade, most of which are still with us: *Wolverine and Deadpool*, *Avengers United*, *The Mighty World of Marvel*, and, most recently, *Fantastic Four Adventures*.

A sole DC Collector's Edition was added about three years ago, although, surprisingly, *Batman: Legends* was not joined this year by a companion Superman title prior to the new movie. But I digress.

I guess the point I'm trying to make is that this was an easier transition for the UK market to take, because we've always had a tradition of anthology comics. Moreover, as the cover prices of weekly comics closed in on those of Marvel's existing UK monthly titles (until 1978, all the UK comics had been weeklies; thereafter, the line had been a mixture of weeklies and monthlies), larger comics were an easier sell. It was also the culmination of a long quest to find a format that could take complete strips in every issue without the back catalog being exhausted. Every time this had been tried in the weeklies during the '70s, they (unsurprisingly) nearly caught up with the States with almost disastrous consequences on several occasions.

So would U.S. readers readily take to compendiums, such as Hawes' logical Avengers, Iron Man, and Captain America combination, for instance? I can't see it happening anytime soon, unless Marvel hits huge sales problems and has to strike out in a new direction to survive. If it did try this, I think the comics would have to be U.S.-sized. As Maggie says, Marvel never cracked the magazine format in the States — *Conan* apart — unlike in the UK. That was why I was amazed when the U.S. format caught on over here and became such a popular addition to our range of titles.

The other problem, as Brent outlined, is that Marvel has no logical place on U.S. newsstands in supermarkets, bookstores, and so forth, having lost this with the — I think wrong — complete move to the direct market. This shut out a general audience that would never venture into a comics shop and has led to the industry more or less shouting at itself ever since.

Many have now realized that the industry needs to spread its net to bring in new readers from the outside. But, with no walk-past newsstand presence, no matter *how* many successful Marvel movies come out, they won't help to lift sales. I, too, want to see the market thrive, but getting back into these markets will require fresh thinking, if comics aren't forever locked into a fan-only ghetto. Damn, you've depressed me now.

Maggie: *You can cheer up a bit.*

One development that would have stunned most fans a decade ago is that there are now chain bookstore shelves packed with comics books of all sorts.

While manga crowd many of those shelves, such projects as Marvel and DC economical black-and-white comics reprints from the Silver Age are there, too. And they're just right for nostalgic adults ***and*** *new young readers.*

GONE OR FORGOTTEN?

Mike Axtell
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There are a handful of comics I like that seem to be missing in action. Any idea what happened to them?

These are the books I'm talking about: *Mark Millar's Unfunnies*, *The Atheist*, *I Am Legion*, and *Bad Planet*.

Have they been canceled or just forgotten? If they don't start coming out soon, they will be forgotten by comics fans everywhere.

Maggie: *A check online reveals the following:*

Mark Millar's Unfunnies. *Announced as a four-issue miniseries from Avatar Press, it began in December 2003, and the third issue was announced for shipping in October 2004.*

The Atheist. *Beginning in April 2005 from the Image imprint Desperado, the series is written by Phil Hester and drawn by John McCrea. The website is* ***www.desperadopublishing.com****, where three issues are listed as having been published.*

I Am Legion. *The product of the team of writer Fabien Nury and artist John Cassaday was released in August 2004 and was part of the product from DC with Humanoids Associes.*

Bad Planet. *The Raw Studios project distributed by Image Comics was planned as a 12-issue series put together in cooperation by Thomas Jane, Steve Niles, Tim Bradstreet, and Lewis Larosa. Cut down to a six-part project, it began in December 2005.*

HEROES IS SUPER

David M. Harszlak
Via ***CBGXtra.com***

I've managed to watch all but this week's (Sept. 23) episodes of *Heroes* and all I have to say is *wow*. This show is so fast-paced and so engrossing that, when the end comes, you keep asking yourself, "It's over already?" I haven't had that feeling about any television show in a long, long time — not even *Lost*.

As for NBC — so *Trek* got canceled. Get over it. Yes, I agree that NBC is not the best network out there right now, and they have ruined both the Sci-Fi Channel and A&E networks since they took over ownership of those cable channels, but that doesn't mean that everything they show is terrible.

Then again, according to a write-up in the business section of *USA Today* recently, NBC is in financial trouble and plans to eventually cut back its dramas and replace them with news and reality TV shows because they cost a lot less to produce. This could do in *Heroes*, and I think NBC's financial woes were the real reason Sci-Fi canceled *Stargate SG-1*, not because of poor ratings, or, as they put it, "It's now the right time to end it."

I'll miss *Stargate SG-1*; it was a fun show. As for *Heroes*, as long as it's on, I will continue to watch. I only wish I didn't have dial-up, because I would like to read the online *Heroes* comics posted at NBC's website, but my Internet connection is just too darn slow. And, no, I can't upgrade to broadband, because cable is too expensive and Verizon refuses to run its DSL lines into my neighborhood — my neighbors and I aren't rich enough for them.

In any event, I have to say that *Heroes* has quickly become my weekly must-see TV show.

I'm starting to believe that there's a conspiracy involving the government (or some as yet unspecified mega-corporation). They are the bad guys, perhaps even the secret power behind this Sylar character, and the cheerleader's father just *might* be the good guy. My memory is a bit fuzzy on this, but I don't believe that the cheerleader's father and his accomplice have actually killed anyone. They've only left them mindwiped.

Here's what I'm thinking: By mindwiping them, they are, in fact, saving these people's lives because they don't remember that they have powers, and, if they don't use their powers, then they don't become targets for Sylar.

Just a thought.

What if all the people who are gaining powers were, in fact, part of a multi-national plot to alter human DNA? What if the results were not what the powers that be desired? Thus, now they are trying to secretly kill all these newly empowered individuals to cover up this secret experiment. Enter Sylar, their secret assassin. Just a theory.

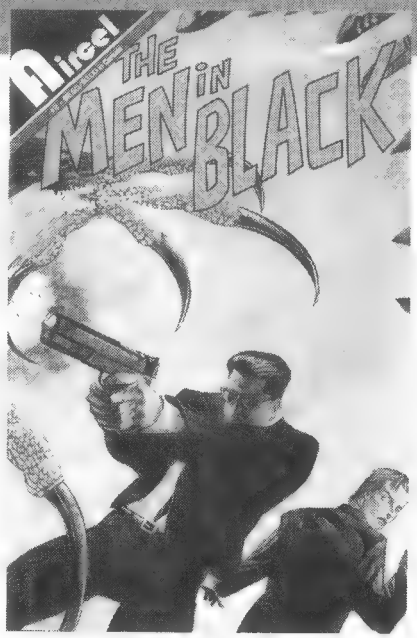
Finally, what if the cheerleader's father was one of the scientists who worked on that secret project? That would explain a lot.

WHAT'S SO MARVELOUS?

Nelson Jimenez

I love the new creative teams on both *Action* and *Superman*. The art from Kubert and Pacheco is awesome, but I hope that the Superman costume does not include the lame "S" shield on the belt buckle — very corny and the only thing I didn't like about the Brandon Routh movie. *Smallville* continues to be a marvel (sorry about that), and it's still one of the better versions of Superman in quite a while.

I recently read about Marvel buying some sort of book company (Dabel, I think?), but is this going to go the way of the Ultraverse? Marvel bought the Malibu line, and all the



characters were then put into limbo. I would love to see some of these characters come back — maybe Prime as an Avenger or Rune as a Thanos-level villain. Heck, I'd even settle for Night Man. (How the heck did he ever get his own television series?)

Since 007 is back with *Casino Royale*, who owns the rights to do comic books based on the character? I know DC, Marvel, Topps, and Eclipse published some, but were there others? Did Britain ever do a Bond series? It would be great to see an *Essential James Bond* with all the various titles over the years. What do the fans say?

Ray: *Marvel recently formed a* ***partnership*** *with Dabel Brothers Productions. However, as plans are already in the works for multiple projects, it seems unlikely that this will be an Ultraverse-like situation.*

As for info on James Bond, see last month's letters column, page 180.

Maggie: *Probably the most successful Malibu project was Lowell Cunningham's* ***Men in Black*** *— not part of the Ultraverse.*

I think there's a lot on Marvel's editorial plate these days, but, yes, there were some delightful projects in the Malibu archives. It could be entertaining to see some enter the mainstream Marvel world, depending on the contracts under which those characters were initially created.

A HISTORY OF COMICS

Mark P. Steele
Via ***CBGXtra.com***

I can't quote exact dates or figures, but I can give a general overview of the boom-and-bust cycles of comics.

FOR ART'S SAKE

by Chris Smigliano

In the late '80s, there was a black-and-white boom, as many small publishers entered the field. As more and more did so — some with publications that lasted and some that were solicited but never published — it put a strain on both distributing and comics-shop resources, mainly because comics were sold non-returnably to those shops. This led to the black-and-white bust.

In the early '90s, a number of better-funded companies, such as Eclipse, Capital, Image, and others were publishing. Speculators in the comics field bought up large lots of copies, creating what is called the "speculative bubble." Sales on titles were expanded far beyond the readership.

When some of these speculators found out that they couldn't turn around and make a lot of money from these comics by selling them in six months or so, the speculative bubble burst. One of the hardest-hit of the companies was Valiant, which ended up with tremendous overstock, forcing the company to reorganize according to their new sales plateaus.

Also during this time, Marvel bought its own distribution company and pulled its titles from other distributors. This had several immediate effects:

1) Small distributors, faced with losing about one-third of their wholesale product, went under.

2) Marginal comics shops, faced with either losing Marvel, losing two-thirds of their other product to become a Marvel-only shop, or having twice as much paperwork to fill out, went under. Estimates from the time placed about two-thirds of the shops in the country going under.

3) Sales of Superman titles declined to about one-third previous levels.

4) Marvel's sales declined, and it was forced to shut down its distribution arm.

5) Diamond became the largest U.S. comics distributor by absorbing Capital, Heroes World, and smaller distributors and gaining an exclusive contract with Marvel.

Readers who can refute, verify, clarify, or expand on these are asked please to do so. Thank you.

Maggie: *The black-and-white glut wiped out one of the largest distributors of its time: Glenwood. Also at the time of that glut, there was no truly national comics-shop distributor. It was the sale of Bud Plant's West Coast distribution company to Diamond that put the latter on track as a national distributor.*

The big two distributors by the early 1990s were Capital and Diamond. Heroes World was really a local distributor that, when acquired by Marvel, couldn't handle the move to national business.

It wasn't so much that Valiant ended up with tremendous overstock as that the shops that overestimated customer demand for back issues had overordered and were saddled with that overstock. When they went under, everything went to Hell in the proverbial handbasket.

And it was that overestimated customer demand that was at the root of two cycles of boom and bust. With shops having to guess two months in advance at what their customers would buy and with customers who had been, not readers, but self-styled "investors" who suddenly discovered their "savings" were worthless, the moment that everyone woke up was sudden and catastrophic.

Dave Cockrum

November 11, 1943 - November 26, 2006

Word came at press time that comic-book artist Dave Cockrum had died from complications of his diabetes. His widow, Paty, has not announced memorial plans, if any, and has requested that no one call at this point. ***CBG*** will carry more information next month about the artist who defined the look of several of the most popular X-Men, to say nothing of his compelling art stylings in general.

Jerry G. Bails
June 26, 1933 - November 23, 2006

A — maybe *the* — founding father of comic-book fandom died of a heart attack Nov. 23.

In the course of Bails' earning his Ph.D. in Natural Science and joining the faculty of Wayne State University, he was following the rebirth of super-heroes in comic-book adventures. As he applied his scholarly skills to the field of comics, he pioneered many projects, among them:

• Creation of the first long-lasting fan publication devoted to the super-hero genre: *Alter-Ego* #1 was put in the mail at the end of March 1961.

• Bringing other fans together to serve as contributors and audience of fan material. Roy Thomas was one of the first of these and provided major contributions to the production of the first issue of *Alter-Ego*. (Today, Thomas continues as editor of the revived publication.) But Bails also sought steady rises in circulation for his fanzine, gaining readers via recommendations in comic books of the day.

• Creation in September 1961 of *The Comicollector* as a companion to *Alter-Ego*: Though not the first comics-only fanzine devoted to advertisements, it was the first to run for several years.

• Spinning off a comics newsletter from the less-frequently published *Alter-Ego* with *On the Drawing Board* (which became *The Comic Reader*) in October 1961.

• Beginning work in 1962 on the first extensive index to Golden Age comics with his *The **All-Star** Index*.

• Turning over editorship of some of his projects to others for continuation in 1962.

• Beginning a tradition of comic-book fan awards, with the first Alley Awards (in 1962) voting tributes to comics published in 1961.

• Playing host to one of the earliest gatherings of comics buffs with an overnight party to count ballots for the awards for 1963 in an "Alley Tally" in March 1964.

• Founding the comics field's first amateur publishing association with the CAPA-alpha organization in October 1964.

• Beginning a project of preserving long-lost comics via microfilm records.

• Expanding his indexing projects with *Collector's Guide: The First Heroic Age* (1969) to the ambitious (and still continuing) *The Who's Who of American Comic Books*, begun with co-editor Hames Ware, with Vol. One of that project published in 1973. His *Who's Who of American Comic Books 1928-1999* is available online at *www.bailsprojects.com*.

As time went on, he provided two fundamental approaches to the field that cemented his importance: (1) He established a tradition of replacing his position with other custodians, so that projects did not die when he left them. (2) He adapted research projects to later media, so that his indexes (begun in print form) continued to evolve, as tools were developed to advance them.

Oh, and he was a delight to chat with on a variety of topics, even as his contributions far outstripped the short list here.

A FRIEND

Ray Bottorff Jr.
*Via **CBGXra.com***

This is the saddest notice I have ever had to pass along to my friends in comic-book fandom. I just received a call from Jerry Bails' wife, Jean, of the news that he, The Father of Comic Book Fandom, died in his sleep today of an apparent heart attack. He was 73.

Jerry had been suffering a serious heart condition for the past several years. In recent months, the physical discomfort he had experienced had kept him mostly homebound, but his mind remained as sharp as ever, thanks to the contact he was able to continue with friends and family through the Internet.

At this time, details of any services or funerals are not yet known. According to Jean, Jerry's wishes were for something simple, and the family is in the process of working on that.

Historian Bob Beerbohm (left) compared notes with Jerry Bails at a fan gathering in 1997.

Jerry was a lot of things to a lot of people. For me, he was a mentor, a teacher, a guide whose wisdom and kindness helped make the world an even better place for many. But, most importantly, I am and will always be deeply proud that I consider Jerry to be my friend. I am a little less not to have his wisdom gracing my ears any longer and I am much *more* knowing that I did have time on this Earth in having that same wisdom touch my heart.

My deepest love goes out to Jean, Kirk, and all other family members and loved ones of Jerry.

THE FATHER

Tony Isabella
*Via **CBGXtra.com***

I'm getting ready to leave for Mid-Ohio-Con, and it hits me that I wouldn't be going there, if it weren't for Jerry Bails. I wouldn't be communicating with fans online, if it weren't for Jerry Bails. He was at the forefront of just about every important event in the early days of comics fandom. It's not exaggeration to call him The Father of Comics Fandom.

He was changing my life before I ever met him. I don't think I would have ever considered a career in comics without having been part of comics fandom as a teenager. When I *did* meet him, he was every bit as generous, kind, and just plain smart as I could have hoped. And it has been a joy to have been in some online groups with him in recent

years and exchange e-mails. I was learning from him right to the end of his life and I suspect I'll continue to learn from him to the end of mine.

God bless you, Jerry, and thank you.

THANKS

Jeffrey H. Wasserman
Via ***CBGXtra.com***

I never met Jerry Bails but I was certainly influenced by his good works, particularly due to his formation of comics fandom's first amateur press alliance, CAPA-alpha. I was a member of CAPA for 15 years and, in that time, I met many, many wonderful and talented people whose expressions of love and joy for comics knew no bounds.

The camaraderie among the members was heartfelt and true, even though it lived solely through the United States mail at first. It blossomed into real friendships at conventions where members congregated — and later in New York and Los Angeles, where many members gravitated.

CAPA-alpha was a major building block for me when I joined at 19 years of age. The "publish or perish" membership requirement prepared me for graduate school, and its diverse membership introduced me to people of backgrounds far different from mine.

Thank you, Jerry.

IN THE 'ROOM'

Walter Loyd Lilly
Via ***CBGXtra.com***

I'm not sure, at least right now, what I can say. I am so aware of Jerry Bails' ultra-importance to the very existence of comic-book fandom.

In an odd way, I, at least, had the honor to have some very slight contact with him recently through participating in the Yahoo! Timely-Atlas group, on which he posted. It was extremely slight, but at least I was, sort of, in the same "room" with him.

My condolences to his family and friends.

In some ways, I wish I could have known him — or, at least, met him.

WITHOUT HIM – WHAT?

Lee Houston Jr.
Via ***CBGXtra.com***

Death is not an easy thing to deal with, regardless of the context. While unfortunately I cannot relate any first-hand remembrances as to Jerry Bails' importance, either as a human being or within at least comic fandom, if not the industry, as well, that does not by any means diminish his achievements or love of this medium.

There probably would not have been any conventions for me to attend without his input. Creators might have continued to work in obscurity and never received their well-deserved kudos without people like Bails wondering whom they had to thank for all the wonderful stories that they read. Would many of the Golden Age or Silver Age greats be remembered without him?

It is painfully obvious that we would all be the poorer without his contributions and that he will be missed.

My personal condolences to his family, and my voice to the public mourning of his passing.

Without Jerry Bails' input, I might never have become a comic-book reader.

INFLUENTIAL

Russ Maheras
Via ***CBGXtra.com***

I found out last night and I was stunned, as well. The huge amount of influence he had molding comics fandom as we know it cannot be overstated.

On a personal level, we corresponded for several years during the late 1980s, while I was in the Air Force stationed on Okinawa, and, in 1997, during Wizard World Chicago, I had the privilege of finally meeting him during the wonderful Fandom Reunion luncheon at the Pine Grove Restaurant near the convention center.

It is a sad, sad day, and he will be greatly missed.

THE SITE

Doc Boucher
Via ***CBGXtra.com***

I had just been communicating with Jerry about an article about him and was shocked when I got the news. I hope to communicate with the family to offer to keep his *Who's Who* site running.

I hope you and others help me, as I will be making a page for Jerry in the IF Hall of Fame after my cataract surgery next week.

Thanks.

JEAN BAILS WRITES

Jean Bails
Via ***CBGXtra.com***

I have been reading the kind words about Jerry and shared them with his sons, as well. I thank you, as do they. I hope to get around to sending a more personal thanks to each soon.

At the 1997 gathering, attendees (front to back) included Roy Thomas, Jerry Bails, Maggie Thompson, and Russ Maheras.

What would Jerry say? He would probably have said, "Aw, stop — you are making me blush."

Actually it is *my* read of his involvement in fandom that it was not all about him — it was about *you.* Surprisingly as it may seem, fandom was not that much about comic characters either, but rather, it was about people discovering their potential in whatever area and developing confidence in what they could do. Also, fandom was, above all, good people cooperating with one another to create an entity that was greater than the sum of its parts.

Looking at the size of some of the fanworks and conventions, he would sometimes joke, "A monster has been created," but it was a monster he dearly loved. He had no misgivings about fandom going on quite well without him. It will because of all of you.

Thank you very much.

We have decided against having either a formal or informal memorial service at *this* time. Instead, we were thinking of maybe planning a get-together some time around Jerry's birthday in June. If there were a convention in the area, it could maybe be coordinated around that time, but not so that it would interfere with the convention activities.

For those who may have thought of sending flowers, Jerry would have preferred, instead, a small donation to Amnesty International or Doctors Without Borders or any charity of choice. No pressure — no donations are fine, too. We don't keep track of such things.

ATLAS' JUNGLE GIRLS' ARTISTS

Michael J. Vassallo

Nice to see an article on one of the Atlas jungle girls (Michelle Nolan, #1625, page 110). Let me fill in and make comments on the artists. First, the uncredited covers were drawn by Timely stalwart Carl Burgos, who was the unofficial cover editor of the Atlas line. That Jay Scott Pike, a terrific romance and adventure artist, wasn't supplying any covers, is a shame.

Second, Pike as the Jann artist is only *part* of the attribution. None of these stories are signed, and Pike always signed his stories. The reason these aren't is that Pike didn't work on them alone. Christopher Rule, at the very least, appeared to ink — or even redraw Jann's face — in most panels. Look at the panel you reproduce on page 112. That Jann face is Chris Rule inks over possible Pike pencils. There also appears to be another hand here, since evidence of Pike often seems to vanish from panel to panel in many stories.

Now, in early 1955, Pike took over the Lorna feature from Werner Roth. The earliest Pike Lorna stories are pure Pike and signed by him. By 1956, they morph into the same type of Pike-Rule-someone else art seen on these Jann stories. So it's a strange brew, these stories.

More tidbits: The Joe Maneely cover on #11 is Maneely on the hunter and backgrounds, but the Jann figure — outside of the head — has been repositioned and likely drawn by someone else. Finally, the unsigned Waku story in #8 was drawn by Fred Kida.

STORAGE A MAJOR ISSUE

George Hagenauer

Storage has been a major issue for me forever. My wife wants the collections contained, so I'm continually pruning and thinning in order to have space for new and more interesting books. I've sworn off most three-dimensional objects. The only space for them is at the edges of whatever bookshelves I have. There are, though, a couple of tricks that have helped me store and enjoy the collections at the same time.

First, I mount framed original art on the front of the bookcases, usually by whatever genre is in the bookcase. Thus, my true-crime books are covered by Capone-era true-crime magazine covers and editorial cartoons. The Golden Age sections have the cover to *Sparkler* #1 and a 1940's *Plastic Man* page. The Silver Age: My *Adam Strange* and Manning *Magnus Robot Fighter*, *etc.* When I need to get to the books, it is easy to unhook and remove the art. The rest of the time I can enjoy looking at it.

Second, I discovered that old lunchboxes make good storage units for Big Little Books. I had been helping the widow of an old friend sell her husband's collection. There were a few late-1980s lunchboxes. I tried them at shows and at consignment stores and there were still several nice ones that were not selling, even at $20 each. When she decided to drop the price again, *I* bought them, because they fit the BLBs so well. Lined with Mylar, they provide extra protection for the BLBs while providing lively color for the edges of the shelves.

My pinback-button collection is mainly pinned to cardboard mounted on the inside of the door to my armoire, where it is protected, but I can see it every day when I pull out my clothes. Those are some of the tricks I've developed over the years.

TALK OF AGES

Dave Blanchard

Via ***CBGXtra.com***

I think we've been over this a few zillion times, but let's try it again:

The Golden, Silver, and even the so-called Bronze Age all reflect periods of time when the super-hero genre began, flourished, and then ebbed. For consistency's sake, we can frame out these ages by pinpointing "start" and "stop" dates that coincide with significant, specific comic books. For instance, *Action Comics* #1 began the Golden Age, and the Golden Age ended with *All-Star Comics* #57; some point to the last issue of *Captain America* before that title went weird. Similarly, the Silver Age began with *Showcase* #4 and ended with either *Fantastic Four* #102 or *Superman* #232 — these issues came out within a couple months of each other. The Bronze Age started with *Giant-Size X-Men* #1 and ended, well, I dunno if there's a definitive end date for the Bronze Age, but I'd go with *Crisis on Infinite Earths* #12.

Between the Golden and Silver Ages and between the Silver and Bronze Ages, there were distinct periods when the super-hero age ebbed considerably. I don't know that there has ever been a period since the mid-1970s when the super-hero genre has ebbed even the slightest, so figuring out exactly when the Bronze Age ended becomes a problem.

Similarly, coming up with a whole 'nother metallic age, like "copper," smells as if it's motivated entirely by those with a financial stake in goosing up the value of 1990s comic books. I think nostalgia for the 1990s is still many years off, thank goodness, so I invite everybody to just laugh heartily whenever somebody suggests a "Copper Age." Try it, it's fun: Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha!

IT'S ALL HYPE

Lee Houston Jr.

Via ***CBGXtra.com***

I would like to suggest the Hype Age for the period covering the black-and-white-independent market glut and all the gimmick covers: holograms, fold-out, embossed, alternate covers, *etc.*

I think the Golden Age should include the entire comic-book industry of that period, for there were plenty of comic books — including *Detective Comics* — out before *Action Comics* #1. Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster's "Slam Bradley" started in the very first issue of *Detective Comics* (Mar 37), while another creation of theirs, "Doctor Occult," started with the October 1935 issue of *New Fun Comics*, the predecessor of what would eventually evolve into *Adventure Comics*.

If that isn't a strong enough argument for including *all* the comic books printed before June 1938 — the cover date of *Action Comics*' first issue — I don't know what is.

Ray: *For anyone wanting to see the (or at least a) definitive examination of the various ages — and especially the Bronze Age — see the 28-page "Battle of the Ages" in* ***CBG*** *#1608 (Sep 05).*

The Adventures of Bumpkin Buzz
- ©TM 2006 BY - BRIAN DOUGLAS AHERN
CABLE BOX
EPISODE 11.06
CAN YOU HELP ME? YOU'RE NOT CARRYING THE CW CHANNEL-- I'M MISSING ALL MY FAVORITE SHOWS!
YEAH, YEAH... YOU'LL NEED THIS CABLE BOX AND SMALL REMOTE.
THIS HAD BETTER WORK! I'M MONTHS BEHIND ON SMALLVILLE! HOW DID CLARK GET OUT OF THE PHANTOM ZONE??
WHAT ABOUT LEX AND ZOD-- WAIT! WHERE ARE THE DIRECTIONS FOR THIS THING?
YOU DIDN'T GIVE ME ANY INSTRUCTIONS FOR THAT STUPID BOX!
OH, RIGHT. YOU'LL NEED THIS LITTLE BOOKLET.
WHAT ABOUT VERONICA MARS? WILL SHE AND LOGAN STAY TOGETHER THIS TIME, OR-- HEY!!
ATTACH WIRES--? WHAT WIRES?!
YOU DIDN'T GIVE ME THE WIRES!!
YOU'RE JUST NEVER SATISFIED, ARE YOU? HERE.
BUT--! THE DIRECTIONS CALL FOR RED AND YELLOW PLUGS. THESE ARE BLUE AND GREEN!
YOU'LL TAKE WHAT I GIVE YOU AND BE THANKFUL TO GET IT.
THIS DOESN'T WORK!! IT'S DESIGNED TO HOOK INTO AN ENTERTAINMENT CENTER, NOT A SEPARATE VCR AND DVD PLAYER! GAH!!
I'M MISSING ONE TREE HILL! HOW DID NATHAN ESCAPE DROWNING IN THE SUBMERGED LIMO?! IS HALEY PREGNANT?? NATHAAAN!!
WHILE BUZZ RAGES, A TINY CAMERA HIDDEN INSIDE HIS NEW CABLE BOX RECORDS EVERYTHING...
AGGH!! SUPERNATURAL!! WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT TRUCK SMASHED INTO SAM AND DEAN?! WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS TO ME???
HAS HE FIGURED OUT HOW TO MAKE IT GIVE HIM A FISH BISCUIT YET?
NAH. GO TORTURE KATE AND SAWYER FOR A WHILE. I'M GONNA SHOW JACK THE RED SOX GAME.
-BRIZ '06

Drawing inspiration from fresh sources

Consider these scenarios ...

by **PETER DAVID**

I'm going to go on the assumption that the Department of Homeland Security, or perhaps the CIA or someone like that, is monitoring all publications having to do with the realm of imagination.

The Department of Homeland Security has been hiring writers of political thrillers to serve in an advisory capacity. Apparently, an administration that said "no one could have foreseen" the attack on the World Trade Center five years ago came to the realization that novelists have been foreseeing exactly that sort of thing for years. (Witness Tom Clancy's having a plane crash into the Capitol back in the mid-'90s.) So the Red Cell program was instituted, as — according to *The Washington Post* — "futurists, philosophers, software programmers, a pop musician, and a thriller writer" were, and are, summoned to present out-there scenarios as to what terrorists might try to do. A couple months ago, they even chose — in September 2006 — DC's own Brad Meltzer to participate, although one assumes it's more because of such Washington-based thrillers as *The Zero Game* or *The Tenth Justice* than anything he's done on *Justice League of America*.

I can't help but wonder if they've considered hiring Chris Carter. Or, even more specifically, Vince Gilligan, John Shiban, and Frank Spotnitz. Chris Carter you presumably know: creator of *The X-Files*, a science-fiction series that Carter repeatedly asserted wasn't science fiction — presumably because, if Fox staffers had realized it *was* science fiction, they would have canceled it immediately. And *X-Files* was the birthplace of The Lone Gunmen, the conspiracy-minded trio who were later spun off into their own TV series.

But who are Gilligan, Shiban, and Spotnitz? Well, they wrote the pilot episode that aired in March 2001 and featured our heroes thwarting a plot that involved a commercial airline flying into The World Trade Center. Unfortunately, The Lone Gunmen don't exist in real life (although the actors, some of whom I've met at conventions, are personable enough ... and Dean Haglund (Langly) has even invented something he calls a "Chill Pak," a device designed to prevent laptop computers from overheating and even speeds up their operation). And, since apparently no one in the government watched *The Lone Gunmen* (which unfortunately put the government in the same category as the vast majority of Americans), the real-life attack was pulled off unimpeded. Indeed, sometimes I wonder if — should they finally find whatever cave bin Laden is hiding in — they're going to see a poster of The Lone Gunmen posted on the wall.

I think this Red Cell project has potential. Now no one has asked me to participate. Being as American and patriotic as the next guy (unless the next guy is, y'know, a terrorist), I want to do all that I can. So I'm going to go on the assumption that the Department of Homeland Security, or perhaps the CIA or someone like that, is monitoring all publications having to do with the realm of imagination. For that matter, in this day and age, they may be monitoring my computer even as I write this. Therefore, I am offering my thoughts as to possible terrorist schemes — and even how such schemes could be thwarted. In the spirit of the Red Cell concept, I'm trying to think somewhat outside the box. I've even given the schemes code names so they sound sufficiently James Bondian:

Operation Moon Shot

Step One: The terrorists hijack a superpowerful laser. (A side note, for those who are interested — L.A.S.E.R. is an acronym standing for Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation. Except it doesn't really involve Amplification; instead, it's Light Oscillation. But the story goes that no scientist wanted to work on a project called L.O.S.E.R.) They obtain the laser through any number of means: Possibly, they hijack a shipment from a major corporation. Or they steal it from a powerful millionaire.

Step Two: The terrorists have a big meeting in which they lay out Operation Moon Shot to a group of other terrorists. One of the terrorists stands up, announces that he won't cooperate because this isn't what he signed on for, whereupon the terrorist leader blows him away with the laser in order to show what a badass he is.

Step Three: The terrorists unleash the super-laser on the moon and blow the moon to pieces.

Before anyone writes in to point out that Peter's solution to Operation Uptown/ Downtown (see Page 192) has already been done (at least in part), here's the respective pages from* Marvel Team-Up *#28 (Dec 74). Trust us, don't strain your brains too much on this one.

Step Four: With the moon destroyed, the entire planet is subjected to catastrophic climate changes, including massive tidal waves. Life as we know it is effectively destroyed.

How to thwart Operation Moonshot:

A team of scrappy scientists and construction workers are hurriedly dispatched to the moon, where a massive array of mirrors is set up all along the moon's surface. This is done at the same time as a single secret agent is dispatched to locate the giant laser before it's too late. Either the secret agent manages to locate the laser beam before it's fired and blows up the terrorist headquarters (which is hidden in the heart of a volcano) or else the laser beam is fired but bounces off the mirror, ricochets, and causes the laser to overload and explode, blowing up the terrorist headquarters, which is hidden on a remote island.

Operation Ice Floe

Step One: The terrorists hijack a shipment of nuclear weapons.

Step Two: The terrorists have a big meeting in which they lay out Operation Ice Floe to the other terrorists. One of the terrorists stands up and announces he won't cooperate because this isn't what he signed on for. The terrorist leader then nukes the guy's camp in order to show what a badass he is.

Step Three: The terrorists ring the polar ice caps with their stolen nuclear devices. In detonating them, they melt the polar ice caps, triggering worldwide flooding that annihilates billions of people.

How to thwart Operation Ice Floe

Use a two-pronged attack.

First, enlist the aid of Al Gore to go around the country with a slide show that presents all the dangers inherent in a terrorist strike that would melt the polar ice caps. Then make a film version of the slide show and a tie-in book, thus raising the consciousness of the public so that Americans everywhere can buy boats and flood insurance, thus enabling them to prepare for the worst-case scenario. While that's happening, recruit a scrappy group of CGI arctic animals — preferably a polar bear, a walrus, a woolly mammoth who's found in suspended animation, and those four penguins from *Madagascar* — to team up to stop the terrorist plan through a combination of wits and snappy footwork.

Operation Robot Double

Step One: The terrorists hijack a shipment of robots that were intended to be put to use as miners in West Virginia.

Step Two: The terrorists have a big meeting in which they lay out Operation Robot Double to the other terrorists. One of the terrorists stands up and announces he won't cooperate because this isn't what he signed on for. The terrorist leader then has several of the robots enter the room and crush the lone protesting terrorist to death just to show what a badass he is.

Step Three: The terrorists disguise the robots as powerful politicians and send them to wreak havoc in the American government.

How to thwart Operation Robot Double:

Just keep reelecting the robots. Matters won't seem much different from what they are

And so I turn to you, my faithful readers. Send along your terrorist worst-case scenarios and how you think their evil plans can and should be thwarted. I will run the best ones in a future column.

now, and taxpayers will save money, because the robot politicians won't need to eat and, since they never tire, will probably work more days than ordinary politicians.

Operation Uptown/Downtown

Step One: The terrorists hijack a prototype digging device that is intended to be used for journeys to the center of the Earth.

Step Two: The terrorists have a big meeting in which they lay out Operation Uptown/Downtown to the other terrorists. One of the terrorists stands up and announces she won't cooperate because this isn't what she signed on for. The terrorist leader says that he fully understands, and the protesting terrorist is allowed to leave unscathed. She returns home, goes upstairs, takes off all her clothes, luxuriates in a warm bath, and suddenly hears a loud grinding noise — and her whole house starts violently shaking. Moments later, the entire thing collapses into a gigantic pit that has appeared directly underneath the house.

Step Three: The terrorists use the digging device to cut loose the entirety of Manhattan and set the whole island adrift.

How to thwart Operation Uptown/Downtown:

Enlist the aid of an entire squadron of all those guys who compete in the World's Strongest Man competition. Make certain that they come from a variety of countries, including several guys who have deeply rooted racial hostility for each other. Ultimately, although the terrorists *do* manage to cut Manhattan loose, the World's Strongest Men are given tow cables and, through sheer brute strength, manage to tow the whole island back to where it's supposed to be. Through a tragic mix-up, they put the island in backward, but everyone learns to adjust, and, meantime, the Strong Men who can't stand each other learn to develop tolerance and even a liking for each other.

Operation Apocalypse

Step One: The terrorists hijack an archaeological relic that's found at the bottom of a dig in Egypt. It bears a resemblance to a large sarcophagus.

Step Two: The terrorists have a big meeting in which they lay out Operation Apocalypse to the other terrorists. One of the terrorists stands up and announces he won't cooperate because this isn't what he signed on for, because this is all just superstitious nonsense. The terrorist leader opens the sarcophagus just a crack, and a huge blast of flame rips out and incinerates the protesting terrorist.

Step Three: The terrorists open the sarcophagus and unleash Lucifer, who summons The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse and unleashes the final conflict upon Earth. The entire planet is engulfed in flame, and everyone falls screaming into the pits of hell.

How to thwart Operation Apocalypse

Assemble a crack team of frat boys. Have them throw 10,000 marbles into the path of The Four Horsemen, causing the horses to slip and fall, crushing their riders. They then invite Lucifer back to the frat house, where they get him really drunk and then they take pictures of him in bed with Mark Foley, and they use these pictures to blackmail Lucifer into calling back his attacking hordes and retreating to Hell, which they then seal with quick-hardening foam. Should that prove insufficient, have Stephen Colbert confront Lucifer against a green screen and cut him in half with a light saber.

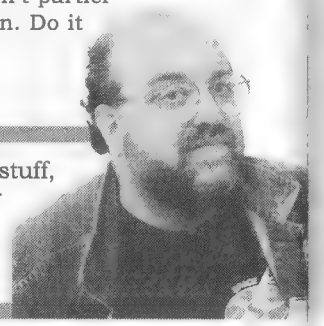
These notions are just a few of the ideas I've come up with to anticipate what the terrorists might do and how we can prevent their evil plans. But I fear that my efforts alone will not suffice. Furthermore, I can't count the number of times I see fans declaring that they know far better than comic-book writers what should happen in upcoming titles. So it is that I turn to you, my faithful readers — or maybe at this point it's just *reader*, I'm not sure; I know my mother still reads this column but I can't be sure about anyone else; my dad keeps saying he's going to get around to it at some point, and God knows my kids can't spare the time to ...

Where was I? Oh. Right.

And so I turn to you, my faithful readers. Send along your terrorist worst-case scenarios and how *you* think their evil plans can and should be thwarted. I will run the best ones in a future column, and those folks whose scenarios are chosen will receive absolutely nothing whatever in return, other than the questionable achievement of having their names in ***CBG*** and the knowledge that they've helped to make America safer.

Godspeed.

(Contributions for this — the BID Cell program — can be sent to P.O. Box 239, Bayport, NY 11705, or e-mailed to *padguy@aol.com*, Attn: Operation BID Cell. And just remember ... if you don't participate, then the terrorists will win. Do it for the children.)



PETER DAVID, writer of stuff, has written But I Digress for CBG since #871 in 1990.

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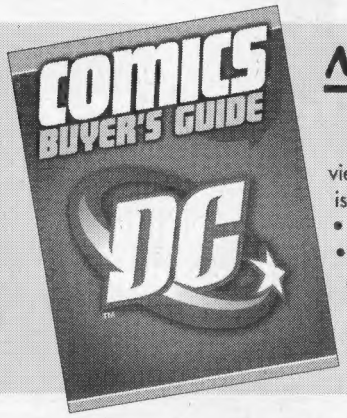

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NEW COMIC

Fits '73 - Current Comics
6-7/8 x 10-3/8

	2 mil	3 mil	4 mil	Polypropylene Resealable 3 mil	Polypropylene Resealable 1.5 mil
100	$ 8.00	$ 10.10	$ 13.60	$ 14.20	$ 6.20
500	34.40	42.50	54.10	61.80	25.70
1,000	50.40	59.80	86.40	102.60	46.90
5,000	220.20	269.20	360.00	481.80	222.90
Pcode:	**SNC2**	**SNC3**	**SNC4**	**SNC3R**	**SPPNCR**

REGULAR MARVEL

Fits 1962-1972 Comics
7-1/8 x 10-3/8

	2 mil	3 mil	4 mil	Polypropylene Resealable 3 mil	Polypropylene Resealable 1.5 mil
100	$ 8.00	$ 10.10	$ 13.60	$ 14.20	$ 6.50
500	34.40	42.50	54.10	63.50	26.80
1,000	50.40	60.20	86.40	105.40	49.90
5,000	220.20	269.20	360.00	481.80	232.00
Pcode:	**SMAR2**	**SMAR3**	**SMAR4**	**SMAR3R**	**SPPMARR**

DELL & SILVER AGE

Fits 1950s-1962 Comics
7-1/2 x 10-3/8

	2 mil	3 mil	Polypropylene Resealable 1.5 mil
100	$ 8.60	$ 11.00	$ 6.80
500	35.10	43.50	28.10
1,000	62.70	72.60	52.40
5,000	280.70	334.30	245.40
Pcode:	**SDSA2**	**SDSA3**	**SPPDSAR**

ORIGINAL ART

11-1/2 x 19
(No Flap)

	3 mil
100	$ 23.90
500	92.30
1,000	175.60
Pcode:	**SOAL**

GOLDEN AGE COMIC

Fits Pre-1950s Comics
7-7/8 x 10-3/8

	2 mil	3 mil	Polypropylene Resealable 1.5 mil
100	$ 9.20	$ 12.70	$ 7.10
500	35.70	49.40	29.90
1,000	64.50	84.40	55.50
5,000	300.10	400.40	261.40
Pcode:	**SGA2**	**SGA3**	**SPPGAR**

TREASURY

Fits Treasury Comics
10-3/8 x 14-1/4

	2 mil	3 mil	Polypropylene Resealable 1.5 mil
100	$ 16.20	$ 19.30	$ 16.80
500	69.80	77.90	62.70
1,000	114.40	144.10	98.70
5,000	528.60	684.50	468.20
Pcode:	**STE2**	**STE3**	**SPPTER**

MAGAZINE

Standard
8-5/8 x 11-1/8

	2 mil	3 mil	Polypropylene Resealable 1.5 mil
100	$ 13.00	$ 14.80	$ 8.50
500	50.20	53.70	35.70
1,000	77.70	97.00	64.10
Pcode:	**SMAG2**	**SMAG3**	**SPPMAGR**

Large
8-7/8 x 11-1/8

	2 mil	3 mil	Polypropylene Resealable 1.5 mil
100	$ 14.20	$ 16.40	$ 8.70
500	54.90	59.20	36.20
1,000	85.30	97.00	65.60
Pcode:	**SMAGL2**	**SMAGL3**	**SPPMAGLR**

Note: Bags have 1-1/2" flap unless noted and come in printed outer packs of 100.

BACKING BOARDS

Prod. Code	Description / size (in)	*Grade	Gauge (in)	$/25	$/50	$/100	$/500	$/1,000
KCB30N	**NEW COMIC**	Economy	0.030	$ 3.80	$ 7.00	$ 10.80	$ 37.40	$ 69.20
KAF28N	6-11/16 x 10-3/8	Intermediate	0.028	7.70	13.70	21.30	85.70	151.00
KAF40N		Superior	0.040	13.30	24.60	42.90	185.90	323.40
KCB30R	**REGULAR COMIC**	Economy	0.030	3.80	7.00	10.70	37.40	69.00
KAF28R	6-15/16 x 10-3/8	Intermediate	0.028	7.70	13.70	21.30	85.70	151.00
KAF40R		Superior	0.040	13.30	24.60	42.90	185.90	323.40
KCB30DSA	**DELL & SILVER AGE COMIC**	Economy	0.030	4.60	7.30	11.30	45.60	77.10
KAF28DSA	7-3/16 x 10-3/8	Intermediate	0.028	9.20	14.60	22.50	91.10	159.90
KAF40DSA		Superior	0.040	14.30	24.90	47.10	197.20	342.80
KCB30GA	**GOLDEN AGE COMIC**	Economy	0.030	5.00	7.70	12.00	48.00	81.70
KAF28GA	7-11/16 x 10-3/8	Intermediate	0.028	9.80	15.20	23.90	95.70	169.10
KAF40GA		Superior	0.040	15.40	27.80	48.30	209.00	363.40

***Economy:** 0.030" thick, non acid-free grade, white on one side. For short-term storage.
***Intermediate:** 0.028" thick, acid-free, white on both sides. For long-term storage.
***Superior:** 0.040" thick, acid-free, white all the way through with 3% alkaline buffer for indefinite-term storage.

ALL BACKINGS COME IN PRINTED OUTER BAGS FOR EASY PRODUCT IDENTIFICATION.

COMIC DIVIDERS

Fit in our Comic Boxes with the lid on.
7-3/8 x 10-7/8

	Plastic	Corrugated 275 lb. test
25	$ 25.50	
50	40.80	$ 16.80
100	70.70	26.90
500	317.80	87.30
1,000	480.30+frt	143.60+frt
	Pcode: DCOMP	**Pcode: DCOM**
	.030 gauge white polystyrene.	White on both sides. Indexed.

COMIC BOOK MAILERS

200# test Brown Corrugated.

	Holds 12-14 Comics.	Holds up to 28 Comics.
10	$ 12.60	$ 17.90
25	23.60	33.40
50	39.90	56.50
100	64.30	90.90
250	132.80+frt	187.90+frt
500	221.40+frt	313.20+frt
	Pcode: MCOM14	**Pcode: MCOM28**
	7½ x 10¾ x 1¼	**7½ x 10¾ x 2½**

STORAGE/DISPLAY BOXES

PLASTIC CORRUGATED STORAGE BOXES

Holds 75-100 comics.
Comes with 3" deep cover.
7-13/16 x 11 x 11

2	$ 20.50
5	41.00
10	71.80
25	146.00+frt

Pcode: XCC100CP

Holds up to 250 comics.
Comes with 3" deep cover.
7-3/4 x 11 x 20

2	$ 28.00
5	58.80
10	102.60
25	203.30+frt
50	385.70+frt

Pcode: XLC250CP

Superior Storage Boxes
Made from white polypropylene waterproof corrugated plastic. Acid-free. UV-resistant. Folds together. Super strong. Stackable.

COMPACT COMIC

7-3/4 x 11 x 15

Pcode		
XCC200	2	$ 12.70
	5	28.40
	10	43.80
	25	90.60
	50	134.30+frt
	100	241.50+frt

Holds up to 200 comics.

LONG COMIC

7-3/4 x 11 x 26

Pcode		
XLC300	2	$ 16.40
	5	35.80
	10	71.20
	25	142.90
	50	189.90+frt
	100	335.40+frt

Holds up to 300 comics.

MAGAZINE

9 x 11-1/2 x 15

Pcode		
XMAG150	2	$ 15.60
	5	35.80
Holds up to 150 Magazines	25	127.50
	50	230.00
	100	338.10+frt

Also use for golden age comics & folded one sheets.

LIFE MAGAZINE

11-1/2 x 14-3/4 x 15-3/4

Pcode		
XLM60	2	$ 17.10
	5	37.00
	25	136.60
	50	238.50
	100	346.20+frt

Holds 60-65 Life magazines or treasury comics.

These boxes are strong enough to stand on. They are 275 lb. test corrugated with a white finish. For extra strength, our Long Comic Boxes have 4 thicknesses of cardboard on the ends with handle holes. Our boxes are easy to assemble and need no tape or glue. All boxes come with a 3" deep cover. **Bags Unlimited Boxes are the standard of the industry. DON'T SETTLE FOR SECOND BEST!**

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C.O.D. orders add $8.50

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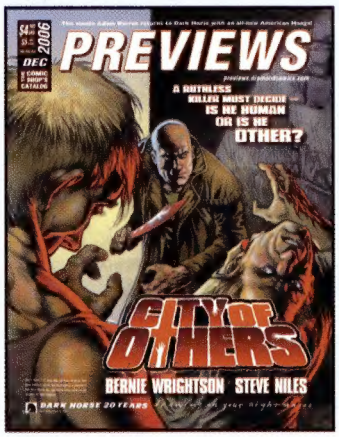
PREVIEWS

One Catalog, TONS of Cool Stuff.

From comic books to action figures, games to DVDs, there's something for everyone in *PREVIEWS*!

The December 2006 Previews has 500+ pages of cool stuff that starts shipping in February!

CITY OF OTHERS #1—Horror Comics legends Steve Niles and Bernie Wrightson present **City of Others**, a scorching new mini-series following a remorseless killer who loves his work, confronted with the life-altering question of all questions: is he human, or is he *Other*?



STEPHEN KING'S THE DARK TOWER: THE GUNSLINGER BORN #1—Personally overseen by Stephen King, Marvel's new "prequel" series reveals the Gunslinger Roland's past! Drawn by Jae Lee and Richard Isanove, adapted by Stephen King expert, Robin Furth, and scripted by Peter David, this series is the perfect introduction to this incredibly realized world!

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- **Catwoman 13-Inch Collector Figure** from DC Direct!
- **Battlestar Galactica: Cylon Apocalypse #1** from Diamond Select Toys!
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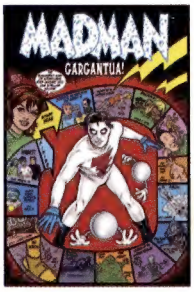
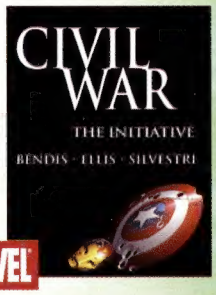
Check This Out!

The Secret #1—Tonight is Tommy Morris's big chance: he's been invited to party with the social elite of Franklin High and maybe even hook up with the girl of his dreams. But when a prank call turns sour, Tommy gets much more than he bargained for... *"I know your secret."*

Absolute Batman: The Long Halloween HC—Packed with extras, the latest volume in DC Comics' "Absolute" series presents Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale's landmark award-winning 13-issue mini-series following the Dark Knight's pursuit of a killer who only strikes on holidays!



Madman Gargantua! HC—Mike Allred and Image Comics are proud to present Frank Einstein's earliest exploits, complete in one GARGANTUAN volume! From *Madman* to *Madman Adventures* to *Madman Comics* — it's all here: 852-pages, complete and unabridged!



Civil War: The Initiative—The war is over. Let the healing begin. This all-new special marks the debuts of the all-new *Omega Flight*, *Mighty Avengers*, *New Avengers*, and Warren Ellis' all-new, all-villainous, *Thunderbolts*!

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